



New Life Christian Community

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come." 2 Cor 5:17

Sunday, September 19, 2021

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PASTORAL PONDERING

ARE YOU RUNNING THE RACE?

As I was watching the Tokyo Olympics a few weeks ago, it reminded me that Tokyo was one of my favorite cities to visit during my international travels for 3M. Tokyo was always very safe, and the culture was warm and helpful. I enjoyed walking through the beautiful Imperial Gardens in Chiyoda City. Watching these professional athletes, I was amazed by their talent, laser focused dedication, and perseverance to run the race for the Gold medal. In the first century, the Romans celebrated the Olympics and the Isthmian Games. Paul used the games as an analogy for a believer's life of faithfulness.

Apostle Paul tells us in *2 Timothy 4:7*, "*I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, and I have kept the faith.*" Paul wrote these words near the end of his life. These three main points in this verse reflect Paul's struggles in preaching the gospel of Christ and his victory over these struggles. Knowing that any day Nero was going to execute him, Paul was able to reflect on his life and have no regrets. Paul was not always popular, but he remained obedient and faithful to Christ to the very end. What a wonderful example for each of us. It should remind us today of our brothers and sisters in Afghanistan and around the world who are being persecuted, tortured, and killed for their faith. After 2000 years, not much has changed, a predictable cycle of sinful nature. Lord Jesus, give them strength and endurance during this very difficult trial.

Hebrews 12:1 tells us "*Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.*" As Elders, we pray for our church body of believers. This summer it felt like our church family had to carry heavy loads of trials, sickness, and suffering. These verses are written to encourage believers to persevere in their faith, while in the midst of trials and persecution. In scripture, endurance is always a characteristic of a true believer.

This race requires us to live a Spirit led life of obedience, endurance, fruit bearing, and faithfulness while giving all the glory to our Lord. Jesus called it the "narrow road". We all know it's a marathon, not a sprint, and are called to stay the course and remain faithful to the end. Paul describes this well in *1 Corinthians 9:25-26*. We did not select the course, for it is God who established it. As we run this race of obedience to His Word, we are graciously being led by His Holy Spirit which lives in every true believer. It is only by His grace that we can run this race. Jesus tells us over and over in the gospels, "If you love me you will obey me."

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PASTORAL PONDERING

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As we run, we must “fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith”, ([Hebrew 12:2](#)). Like Peter, when we get our eyes off the Savior, we start to sink ([Matthew 14:22-33](#)). Jesus perfectly finished His race, and He is the focus of our lives. On the cross He suffered for all the sins of the world! He endured and finished the work the Father gave Him to do. ([John 17:4](#))

Over the years, I have found that a daily regimen of studying God’s Word, prayer, worship, examining my life for habitual sin, repentance, and obedience to God’s Word are critical as we run down the narrow road. Our culture has some loud voices ready to persecute us and is always trying to widen the narrow road. When culture renames sin and then tries to sanctify it, we are heading to judgement. As Pastor Tony put it a few weeks ago from our study in the book of Acts, “Our culture and even our laws are not the moral compass, only God’s Word is.” Scripture makes it very clear that faith without obedience to God’s Word is not saving faith, it’s just intellectual accent. Even the demons have this type of faith, please read [James 2](#).

Here’s a wonderful quote from Charles Spurgeon; “Growing in holiness, becoming more like Christ will always bring true Christians GREAT JOY, because this is what we were made for. So, what about you? Are you content with a shallow devotion to Christ? Or are you ready to run hard after God and become more like Him?”

When God justifies us He also sanctifies us. Jesus explains this in a beautiful way in the Sermon on the Mount, “Every tree is known by its fruit.” We finish the race one step at a time, choosing to testify of God’s goodness and grace and living rightly every day. [Philippians 2:13](#) explains it well; *“for it is God who works in you, both to will and work for His good pleasure.”*

The fact that we shall one day see Christ and be like Him should motivate us to live like Christ today. At the end of our race we will fall into the arms of our Savior.

Your brother In Christ, Jim Nelson

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This Week's Scheduled Events:

Tues	Men's Bible Study- 6:30 am
Tues	Women's Precepts- 6:30-8:00 pm
Wed	Every Man's Battle- 6:00 am
Wed	Immerse Classes- 6:15-7:30 pm
Thurs	Men's Bible Study- 6:30 am
Thurs	Ladies Study- 10:00 am
Thurs	Ladies Bible Study- 12:00 pm
Thurs	Ladies Study- 6:30 pm
Thurs	GriefShare- 6:30 pm (Adults & Youth meet separately)

September Memory Verse:

Galatians 5:13

"For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another." ESV

September Fellowship Tip:

What have you been reading in the Word lately that has ministered to you? Share a post on connect about that or make sure to bring it up in conversation to encourage someone today with the Word.

Sunday Meals and Fellowship:

Sep 19	Meal Team #2
Sep 26	Meal Team #3
Oct 3	Meal Team #4

Contact Barbara Judkins if interested in being on a meal team or a helper.

Check out New Life Online
newlifechristiancommunity.org

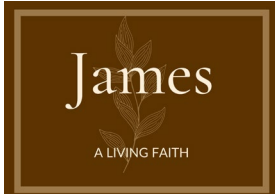
- **Young Men's Study in Colossians:** For those attending the young men's study in Colossians with Andrew Steward, here are the upcoming meeting times. **Monday evenings 9/20, 10/11, 11/8, and 12/6. Study begins at 6:00pm** and is meeting at the Stewart home 15765 392nd St. Center City MN 55012. Locations may change due to weather so keep an eye out for updates in Newsletter. If you have any questions feel free to reach out to Andrew (612) 817-1069
- **Options For Women Annual Banquet:** There is another opportunity to support our local Options for Women at the 2021 Annual Banquet being held at Trollhaugen in Dresser **Sunday evening September 26th.** There will be an auction, dinner, guest speaker and more. If you are interested in joining you will need to RSVP soon. There is more information on how to do that and details of the night on the welcome table.
- **Hall of Men:** Hall of Men meets next **Sunday 9/26 @ 6:30pm!** Young Men, old Men, fathers and sons, you won't want to miss it. You might also want to come with room in your belly :)

welcome

If you are a visitor this morning or have only been coming to New Life for a few months we are glad you are joining with us! If you would like to learn more about New Life, be sure to stop by the Resource Center in the front foyer to pick up a welcome bag we have for you. Please join us for fellowship after service today. We would love to meet and get to know you and for you to get to know us more.



Do you know someone that needs encouragement, support, or celebration? Please remember that New Life has a ministry just for that! Contact Lynn with your request via email: lynnjimmelson@gmail.com or call her cell at 651-373-1426.



Today's Passage:
Pastor Paul's message is from the
New Testament book,
JAMES 1:26-2:13

Sermon Notes: