

***Start to Finish – A Plan for 2009***

This weekend's topic: Focus – Hebrews 11

January 24 & 25, 2009

***Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. Hebrews chapter 12 verse 1 (927)***

“Therefore...” - *What is it there for?*

***It is impossible to please God without faith. Hebrews chapter 11 verse 6 (926)***

Faith = simple trust in God, that he will do what he said, in spite of my circumstances

***How much more do I need to say? It would take too long to recount the stories of the faith of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and all the prophets. By faith these people overthrew kingdoms, ruled with justice, and received what God had promised them. They shut the mouths of lions, quenched the flames of fire, and escaped death by the edge of the sword. Their weakness was turned to strength. They became strong in battle and put whole armies to flight. Hebrews chapter 11 verses 32 - 34 (927)***

- ***Their weakness was turned to strength - That's why I take pleasure in my weaknesses, and in the insults, hardships, persecutions, and troubles that I suffer for Christ. For when I am weak, then I am strong. 2 Corinthians chapter 12 verse 10 (888)***
- ***They became strong in battle - I can do everything through Christ who gives me strength (in the battle!). Philippians chapter 4 verse 13 (901)***
- ***Put whole armies to flight - God has not given us (ME!) a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline. 2 Timothy chapter 1 verse 7 (914)***

My faith in 2009...

- ***The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, He will show you a way out so that you can endure.***  
*1 Corinthians chapter 10 verse 13 (876)*
- ***We are no longer slaves to sin. Romans chapter 6 verse 6 (861)***
- ***If God is for us, who can ever be against us? Since He did not spare even His own Son but gave Him up for us all, won't He also give us everything else?***  
*Romans chapter 8 verses 31 & 32 (863)*

(over)

***But others were tortured, refusing to turn from God in order to be set free. They placed their hope in a better life after the resurrection. Some were jeered at, and their backs were cut open with whips. Others were chained in prisons. Some died by stoning, some were sawed in half, and others were killed with the sword. Some went about wearing skins of sheep and goats, destitute and oppressed and mistreated.***

*Hebrews chapter 11 verses 35 - 37 (927)*

***They were too good for this world, wandering over deserts and mountains, hiding in caves and holes in the ground. All these people earned a good reputation because of their faith, yet none of them received all that God had promised.*** *Hebrews chapter 11 verses 38 & 39 (927)*

***I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, and I have remained faithful. And now the prize awaits me, the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me on the day of His return. And the prize is not just for me but for all who eagerly look forward to His appearing.*** *2 Timothy chapter 4 verses 7 & 8 (915)*

***But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit (FAITH!), gazed steadily into heaven and saw the glory of God, and he saw Jesus standing in the place of honor at God's right hand.***

*Acts chapter 7 verse 55 (836)*

More...

- What area of your life is God asking you to live by faith right now? What's keeping you from doing this?
- Which of the promises mentioned in today's talk is most difficult for you to live out by faith? How will you address this so you can honor God in this area in 2009?
- What is the one issue that has held you back from living a life of full-devotion to God? What will you do to change this in 2009?
- How is God asking you to live this out in 2009? ***Jesus said, "If God cares so wonderfully for wildflowers that are here today and thrown into the fire tomorrow, He will certainly care for you. Why do you have so little faith? So don't worry about these things, saying, 'What will we eat? What will we drink? What will we wear?' These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers, but your heavenly Father already knows all your needs. Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and He will give you everything you need."*** *Matthew chapter 6 verses 30 – 33*

Next weekend: Discipline – Hebrews 12:1-11