

Endurance

The Race Set Before Us

Hebrews 12:1 (ESV) 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,

Difficult details: "... the race ..."

- Race = Agon
 - intense pain of mind or body, a violent struggle, conflict, strife, the struggle that precedes death
- **Hebrews 11:32-38 (ESV)** And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets—who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, were made strong out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. Women received back their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, so that they might rise again to a better life. Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword. They went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, mistreated—of whom the world was not worthy—wandering about in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.
- Do not be surprised: **1 Peter 4:12 ESV** Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you.
- Count the cost: **Luke 14:28 ESV** For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it?

Reassuring details: "... that is set ..."

- O'Brien: The race the writer would have been alluding to was "a race whose course is determined by the masters of the game."
- Providence: God's works of providence are his most holy, wise, and powerful governing of all his creatures and their actions.
- **Isaiah 46:10 ESV** God declares:
the end from the beginning
and from ancient times things not yet done,
saying, 'My counsel shall stand,
and I will accomplish all my purpose,'

- F B Meyer:

There will, of course, be difficulties in all our lives to impede our heavenward progress: difficulties from the opposition of our foes; difficulties from within our own hearts. We shall need patience and long forbearance as we tread our appointed track. But there are ... sources of comfort open to us. Let us remember that the course is set before us by our heavenly Father, who therefore knows all its roughness and straitness, and will make all grace abound toward us, sufficient for our need.

Encouraging details: "... before us ..."

- Hebrews 12:1 (ESV) 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,
- Individual event in a team context. We are running our race individually, but we are not running alone.