

REFLECTIONS

Grace OPC

Perseverance

By Pastor Brian De Jong

Hebrews 12:1-2 Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

The dog days of summer are hotter than hot in northern New Jersey – at least they were in 1977.

I was a freshman at Eastern Christian High School in North Haledon. We had just moved to New Jersey, and I decided to try out for the soccer team. I had never played competitive soccer, so it was all a new experience. In those early practices in July and August, I got my first taste of this sport. Vivid in my mind to this day was the running that we did to build up our conditioning. It was grueling, especially on the hilly roads around the school.

I was not a fast runner by any stretch of the imagination. My pace was plodding, and I routinely finished near or at the end of the pack of my teammates. But I did finish, because that was important to me. I wouldn't allow myself to give up and go home – a failure. I was somewhat driven to complete what I had started.

The Christian life is something like that – it is a long, grueling marathon, not

a fast sprint to the finish line. The author of Hebrews recognized this, and challenges us to “run with perseverance the race that is set before us.” That writer knew how to motivate. He wasn't like the soccer coach who barked out, “Five miles, get going!” But rather he invites his readers to run with him. “Let us run...” he states.



He also speaks of the manner of our running – “with endurance...” Back in 1977, I knew I couldn't keep up with most of the other runners. They were athletes in a way I was not – I couldn't

hope to race them to the finish line in hopes of winning. But slow and steady was my approach. Consistency and faithfulness over time yields endurance. It is the type of running that is focused on finishing rather than on winning. And as I ran, I would talk to myself. “Keep going, Brian...” “Just one more mile, keep running...” I was coaching (and coaxing) myself toward the finish.

The author of Hebrews also points out that the race is “set before us.” We are not making this up on our own – this is not self-determination. And no serious marathon ever allows runners to set their own course. The race track is always designated, and if the runner takes a short-cut, they are disqualified. The rules are quite strict, and you must always remain “in-bounds.” So God has marked out a course for us to run, and has given us that assignment. It is our

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Inside this issue:

<i>Pastor's Article</i>	1
<i>Why We Don't Share the Gospel</i>	2-3
<i>Anchor of Hope Newsletter</i>	4-5
<i>John Ploughman</i>	6-8
<i>Pine Haven Autumn Festival</i>	8
<i>Church Picnic</i>	8
<i>August Birthdays and Anniversaries</i>	9
<i>August Calendar</i>	10
<i>Recipe Corner</i>	11
<i>Spurgeon Corner</i>	12

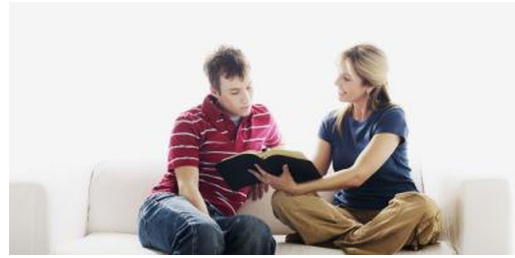
Mnemonics...

- *Church Picnic, August 9th*
- *Meadowview Manor, August 12th*

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Why We Don't Share the Gospel

By Alvin Reid



Jia Jiang feared rejection so much that it consumed his life. He decided to face his fear with an experiment. For one hundred days in a row, he chose to be rejected in a different way daily. He asked a stranger for \$100. He asked another stranger to let him plant a flower in his back yard. He requested a burger refill (rather than a soda refill) at a hamburger joint. He got a no, a no, and a no. But he quickly learned something: the more he was rejected, the more he realized the rejection wasn't as bad as he feared. He also learned from each encounter about people and about himself.

One day he asked a lady at Krispy Kreme to make a donut shaped and colored like the Olympic rings. Remarkably, she said, "Why not?" The video of her creation went viral, reaching over five million views online. Jia's experiment soon made him a sensation, leading to his delivering a TED talk and writing a book on his experience. In fact, his experiment brought him so much fame he had to start rejecting people's requests for his time.

No one loves rejection. But as Jia learned, it's not as bad as we think. After teaching evangelism for thirty-plus years, I've observed two primary fears keeping believers from sharing Jesus with others. The first is the fear of rejection.

I wish I could tell you how to share Christ so no one would reject it, but that's not realistic. The gospel is an offense to many who are perishing. We want to share Christ as winsomely as possible. How do we overcome this fear?

Understand the role of rejection. Rejection comes with being a follower of Christ. Jesus was rejected by His own people. A true prophet in Israel faced rejection for His message. Jesus told us we are blessed when people revile us (Matt. 5:11). A variety of Christianity that is focused on comfort and blessing will not push believers to value rejection for the gospel, but a deep love for Christ will push us to face adversity for His name.

We should see rejection less as an obstacle and more as an opportunity to grow. Rejection can actually be vital to our discipleship. We can learn from the times we are rejected, becoming better at communicating the gospel and increasingly accepting rejection as a part of the path of following Christ.

Most of us want to control the things around us. We have set patterns for small groups, for corporate worship, and so on. But when we talk with a unbeliever about Jesus, we don't actually know how the conversation will go. We have to give up control and trust the Holy Spirit to guide us, and sometimes we aren't comfortable doing that. This is why sharing Christ offers a great way to grow spiritually as we learn to rely on the power of the gospel and the work of the Spirit.

We need to replace our fear with a greater fear. There's an appropriate place for fear in the life of the Christian, but that fear should be aimed at our awesome God. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Prov 1:7). The Apostle Paul declared that we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; thus, knowing the fear of God, we persuade people (2 Cor. 5:10-11). We need to replace our fear of people with a proper fear of God.

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The second fear is the fear of failure. You likely know this fear, which sometimes looks like this: “What if they ask a question I can’t answer? I don’t want to fail the Lord or this person.” Fear of failure sometimes exists because we misunderstand our task. We are called to faithfulness to the gospel, not to win to Christ every single person with whom we share the gospel. Our Lord Jesus Christ did not win every person with whom He shared the gospel. We are ambassadors. Ambassadors do not speak on their authority but for another. We don’t have to be spectacular or breathtaking in our witness, because Jesus is the glorious One. Our success in witnessing is not based on the response of the person with whom we share the gospel. Our obedience pleases our Father even when people do not come to faith.

Nowhere in Scripture are we told that an effective witness must be a Bible answer man or woman. While we wish to answer questions faithfully as possible, our assignment is to give reason of the hope within us (1 Peter 3:15). Paul said the gospel, not our answers, is the power of God to salvation (Rom 1:16).

This leads me to a practical solution for this fear: equipping in witnessing. Giving believers basic training in sharing the gospel with others helps develop confidence when we witness. Believers who earnestly desire to serve Christ -and from my experience, most do - will find such training helpful. I literally get an e-mail or two daily from someone telling me how my recent book *Sharing Jesus without Freaking Out* gave them confidence to share Christ. Many reports come from introverts who overcame their fear by simple training and encouragement. Witness training that allows people to learn through role playing, and field experience helps them to see that they can evangelize others. If you are a pastor, I highly recommend that you give to your people regular instruction in and examples of sharing Christ with others.

God created you for His glory to advance His gospel with the gifts, talents, and abilities He gave you. You can face your fears and share Christ for God’s glory and for your good.

Taken from TableTalk, August 2018



Anchor of Hope Pregnancy Center Update

Center Update

Jacky Drewry
Center Manager



The first six months of 2018 have proven to be extremely fruitful, with the number of clients served exceeding 2017 totals. As client numbers and services expand, we continue to

serve the women, men, and families walking through our doors with excellence and truth. Client exit surveys continue to reflect the superior quality of the services offered at Anchor of Hope with an overall staff rating of 4.95. Thanks to the innovative efforts of our marketing committee, we are also seeing a significant increase in clients at risk for making an abortion decision. Data from 2017 indicate 8% of clients receiving a positive pregnancy diagnosis were categorized at the highest level of risk. That number has dramatically increased to 26% in the first 6 months of 2018.

Enough about numbers! Let's talk about real lives affected by the services offered at Anchor of Hope and how moms find hope through those services. Shannon (not her real name) came to Anchor of Hope at the end of May. She was dropped off by the father of her baby for her scheduled pregnancy test and potential ultrasound. The couple has been together since 2016 and have 2 children together. Due to financial concerns, school, and the fact that she was raising two children under the age of 3, Shannon was planning on having an abortion and commented "that's all I want" in reference to her two children. She was thoroughly convinced that she and the baby's father could not provide for one more child. During her first appointment, Shannon received the free services offered at Anchor of Hope, including a pregnancy test, options counseling, an ultrasound and the listening ear of a client advocate and friend. When her pregnancy was confirmed, Shannon reacted with a stone face as she quietly sat in the medical room. Shannon left Anchor of Hope that day determined to go through with her abortion plan. Shannon's ultrasound revealed she was too early in her pregnancy to detect a heartbeat or even an early intrauterine pregnancy. The nurse sonographer, Liz, wisely informed her about her pregnancy stage and encouraged her to consider coming back for a second ultrasound so that evidence of viability could be determined. Shannon agreed and a second ultrasound was scheduled. For

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Pregnancy Center Update Continued...

those of you on our prayer list, you will recall this as one of our pleas for God's intervention in Shannon's life and her decision.

Five phone calls and one rescheduled appointment later, Shannon did return for her second ultrasound. This scan revealed a beautiful, 7-week 4-day old baby alive and growing in her womb. Visit notes indicated Shannon was "still determined to get the pills" as she asked, "Do you know where I can get those around here?" Too overwhelmed with her 2 children, Shannon was convinced that abortion was her best choice. Her baby's father had left the decision to her, stating he would support her decision either way. Before Shannon left that day, staff discussed Shannon's belief in God with her and shared Ps. 55:22. The appointment ended with Shannon allowing staff to pray for her and a commitment from staff to reach out to her.

I would love to say that due to our amazing staff, excellent services, information provided, or the love felt at Anchor of Hope that Shannon chose life. YES, Shannon DID CHOOSE LIFE. And, yes, each and every one of the above statements assisted in her journey to choosing life. But, in my heart of hearts, I truly believe it was God ALL ALONG. From the Google search that helped her find Anchor of Hope and the availability of staff on that first day (and each subsequent appointment) to her change of heart saying, "I want to have it...but it's hard," it was God every step of the way. He truly goes before and behind us and provides all of a client's needs according to His riches in glory in Christ. Jesus. The credit and glory belong to Him.

Volunteers Needed! Seeking Client Advocates

Does the above client story sound like something God may be calling you to be a part of? We are always seeking compassionate and understanding individuals willing to roll up their sleeves and walk with women (and men) through the mess of life.

Client advocates are those saints among us willing to commit to 2-5 hours a week or bi-weekly to invest in the lives of our clients, helping them to see the hope that is possible. Advocates are trained to discuss difficult and challenging circumstances with love and compassion. Interested persons should call Cassie at 920-452-4673 or email: cassie.matthias@anchorofhopewi.org

John Ploughman

Chapter 2: On Religious Grumblers

When a man has a particularly empty head, he generally sets up for a great judge, especially in religion. None is so wise as the man who knows nothing. His ignorance is the mother of his impudence and the nurse of his obstinacy; and though he does not know a bee from a bull's foot, he settles matters as if all wisdom were at his fingers' ends—the Pope himself is not more infallible. Hear him talk after he has been at a meeting and heard a sermon, and you will know how to pull a good man to pieces if you never knew it before. He sees faults where there are none; and if there be a few things amiss, he makes every mouse into an elephant.

Although you might put all his wit into an eggshell, he weighs the sermon in the balances of his conceit with all the airs of a born-and-bred Solomon. If it be up to his standard, he lays on his praise with a trowel; but if it be not to his taste, he growls and barks and snaps at it like a dog at a hedgehog. Wise men in this world are like trees in a hedge; there is only here and there one. When these rare men talk together upon a discourse, it is good for the ears to hear them; but the bragging wiseacres I am speaking of are vainly puffed up by their fleshly minds, and their quibbling is as senseless as the cackle of geese on a common. Nothing comes out of a sack but what was in it; and as their bag is empty, they shake nothing but wind out of it. It is very likely that neither ministers nor their sermons are perfect—the best garden may have a few weeds in it, the cleanest corn may have some chaff—but cavaliers cavil at anything or nothing, and find fault for the sake of showing off their deep knowledge. Sooner than let their tongues have a holiday, they would complain that the grass is not a nice shade of blue and say that the sky would have looked neater if it had been whitewashed.

One tribe of these Ishmaelites is made up of high-flying ignoramuses who are very mighty about the doctrine of a sermon: here they are as decisive as sledge hammers and as certain as death. He who knows nothing is confident in everything; hence they are bullheaded beyond measure. Every clock, and even the sundial, must be set according to their watches. The slightest difference from their opinion proves a man to be rotten at heart. Venture to argue with them, and their little pots boil over in quick style; ask them for reason, and you might as well go to a sand pit for sugar. They have bottled up the sea of truth and carry it in their waistcoat pockets; they have measured heaven's line of grace and have tied a knot in a string at the exact length of electing love. As for the things which angels long to know, they have seen them all as boys see sights in a peep show at our fair. Having sold their modesty and become wiser than their teachers, they ride a very high horse and jump over all five-barred gates of Bible texts which teach doctrines contrary to their notions. When this mischief happens to good men, it is a great pity for such sweet pots of ointment to be spoiled by flies, yet one learns to bear with them just as I do with old Violet, for he is a rare horse, though he does set his ears back and throw out his legs at times. But there is a bragging lot about, who are all sting and no honey, all whip and no hay, all grunt and no bacon. These do nothing but rail from morning to night at all who cannot see through their spectacles. If they would but mix up a handful of good living with all their bushels of bounce, it would be more bear able; but no, they don't care for such legality. Men so sound as they are can't be expected to be good at anything else; they are the heavenly watchdogs to guard the house of the Lord from those thieves and robbers who don't preach sound doctrine; and if they do worry the sheep or steal a rabbit or two by the sly who would have the heart to blame them? The Lord's dear people, as they call themselves, have enough to do to keep their doctrine sound; and if their manners are cracked, who can wonder! No man can see to everything at once. These are the moles that want catching in many of our pastures, not for their own sakes, for there is not a sweet mouthful in them, but for the sake of the meadows which they spoil. I would not find half a fault with their doctrine if it were not for their spirit; but vinegar is sweet next to it, and crabs are figs in comparison. It must be very high doctrine that is too high for me, but I must have high experience and high practice with it, or it turns my stomach. However, I have said my say and must leave the subject, or somebody will ask me, what have you to do with Don Quixote's windmill?

Sometimes it is the way the preacher speaks which is hauled over the coals. Here again is a dime field for fault-finding, for every bean has its black, and every man has his failing. I never knew a good horse which

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Ploughman Continued....

had not some odd habit or other, and I never yet saw a minister worth his salt who had not some quirk or oddity: now, these are the bits of cheese which cavillers smell out and nibble at, this man is too slow, and another too fast; the first is too flowery, and the second is too dull. Dear me, if all God's creatures were judged in this way, we should wring the dove's neck for being too tame, shoot the robins for eating spiders, kill the cows for swinging their tails and the hens for not giving us milk. When a man wants to beat a clog, he can soon find a stick; and at this rate, any fool may have something to say against the best minister in England. As to a preacher's manner, if there be but plain speaking, none should cavil at it—because it lacks polish, for if a thing is good—and earnestly spoken, it cannot sound much amiss. No man should use bad language in the pulpit—and all language is bad which common people cannot make head or tail of but godly, sober, decent, plain words none should carp at it. A countryman is as warm in homespun as a king in velvet, and a truth is as comfortable in homely words as in fine speech. As to the way; of dishing up the meat, hungry men leave that to the cook, only let the meat be sweet and substantial. If hearers were better, sermons would be better. When men say they can't hear, I recommend them to buy a horn and remember the old saying, "There's none so deaf as those who will not hear." When young speakers get downhearted because of hard, unkind remarks I generally tell them of the old man and his boy and his ass, and what came of trying to please everybody. No piper ever suited all ears. Where whims and fancies sit in the seat of judgment, a man's opinion is only so much wind, therefore take no more notice than of the wind whistling through a keyhole.

I have heard men find fault with a discourse for what was not in it. No matter how well the subject in hand was brought out, there was another subject about which nothing was said, and so all was wrong. That is as reasonable as finding fault with my plowing because it does not dibble the holes for the beans, or abusing a good corn field because there are no turnips in it. Does any man look for every truth in one sermon? You might as well look for every dish at one meal, and rail at a joint of beef because there are neither bacon, nor veal, nor green peas, nor parsnips on the table. Suppose a sermon is not full of comfort to the saint; yet if it warns the sinner, shall we despise it? A handsaw would be a poor tool to shave with; shall we therefore throw it away? Where is the use of always trying to hunt out faults? I hate to see a man with a fine smelling about for things to rail at like a rat catcher's dog sniffing at rat holes. By all means let us cut down error, root and branch, but do let us save our pruning shears till there are brambles to chop, and not fall foul of our own mercies. Judging preachers is a poor trade, for it pays neither party concerned in it. At a plowing match they do give a prize to the best of us; but these judges of preachers are precious slow to give anything even to those whom they profess to think so much of. They pay in praise, but give no pudding. They get the gospel for nothing, and if they doff not grumble, they thinly that they have made an abundant return.

Everybody thinks himself a judge of a sermon, but nine out of ten might as well pretend to weigh the moon. I believe that, at bottom, most people think it an uncommonly easy thing to preach, and that they could do it amazingly well themselves. Every donkey thinks itself worthy to stand with the king's horses; every girl thinks she could keep house better than her mother. But thoughts are not facts; for the sprat thought itself a herring, yet the fisherman knew better. I dare say those; who can whistle imagine that they can plow, but there's more than whistling in a good plowmen. And so let me tell you, there's more in good preaching than taking a text and saying, firstly, secondly, and thirdly. I try my hand at preaching myself, and in my poor way I find it no very easy thing to give the folks something worth hearing. If the line critics, who reckon us up on their thumbs, would but try their own hands at it, they might be a little more quiet. Dogs, however, always will bark, and what is worse, some of them will bite too; but let decent people do all they can, if not to muzzle them, yet to prevent them doing any great mischief. It is a dreadful thing to see a happy family of Christians broken up by talkative fault-finders, and all about nothing, or less than nothing. Small is the edge of the wedge, but when the devil handles the beetle, churches are soon split to pieces, and men wonder why. The fact is, the worst wheel of the cart creaks most, and one fool makes many, and thus many a congregation is set at odds with a good and faithful minister, who would have been a lasting blessing to them if they had not chased away their best friend. Those who are at the bottom of the mischief have generally no part or lot in the matter of true godliness, but like sparrows, fight over corn which is not their own, and, like jackdaws, pull to pieces what they never helped to build. From mad dogs grumbling professors may we all be delivered, and may we

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Ploughman Continued....

never take the complaint from either of them. Fault-finding is dreadfully catching: one dog will set a whole kennel howling, and the wisest course is to keep out of the way of a man who has the complaint called the grumbles. The worst of it is that the foot and mouth disease go together, and he who bespatters others generally rolls in the mud himself before long. "The fruit of the Spirit is love," and this is a very different apple from the sour Siberian crab which some people bring forth. Good-bye, all ye sons of Grizzle, John Ploughman would sooner pick a bone in peace than fight over an ox roasted whole.

Pine Haven Autumn Festival



Join the Women's Auxiliary on [September 8](#) from 1:30 - 6pm at the annual Autumn Festival - featuring a brat fry, baked goods, crafts and music from the Big Cedar Bluegrass Band, held at Pine Haven's new Haven Drive campus community center.

Church Picnic

Mark your calendars for our annual church picnic, planned for August 9th, at 6:00pm. Look for a sign up sheet on the bulletin board in the fellowship hall.



August Birthdays

Jonathan Arndt	3rd
Wendy Froh	15th
Ellen McNeese	20th
Sandy Baatz	29th



August Anniversaries

Brian & De Lou De Jong
~August 9th, 32 years~

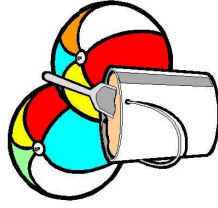




Showing forth the excellencies of Jesus Christ

Grace OPC

August 2018



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9 Church Picnic, 6:00pm	10	11
12 Meadowview Manor	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

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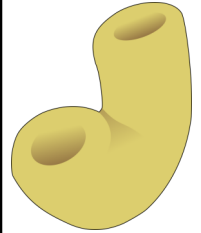
Perfect Macaroni and Cheese

Ingredients:

6 slices good-quality white bread, crusts removed, torn into 1/4- to 1/2-inch pieces
8 tablespoons (1 stick) unsalted butter, plus more for dish
5 1/2 cups milk
1/2 cup all-purpose flour
2 teaspoons kosher salt
1/4 teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg
1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper
4 1/2 cups (about 18 ounces) grated sharp white cheddar
2 cups (about 8 ounces) grated Gruyere or 1 1/4 cups (about 5 ounces) grated pecorino Romano
1 pound elbow macaroni

Instructions:

1. Heat the oven to 375 degrees. Butter a 3-quart casserole dish; set aside. Place bread pieces in a medium bowl. In a small saucepan over medium heat, melt 2 tablespoons butter. Pour butter into the bowl with bread, and toss. Set the breadcrumbs aside. In a medium saucepan set over medium heat, heat milk. Melt remaining 6 tablespoons butter in a high-sided skillet over medium heat. When butter bubbles, add flour. Cook, stirring, 1 minute.
2. Slowly pour hot milk into flour-butter mixture while whisking. Continue cooking, whisking constantly, until the mixture bubbles and becomes thick.
3. Remove the pan from the heat. Stir in salt, nutmeg, black pepper, cayenne pepper, 3 cups cheddar, and 1 1/2 cups Gruyere or 1 cup pecorino Romano. Set cheese sauce aside.
4. Fill a large saucepan with water. Bring to a boil. Add macaroni; cook 2 to 3 fewer minutes than manufacturer's directions, until outside of pasta is cooked and inside is underdone. (Different brands of macaroni cook at different rates; be sure to read the instructions.) Transfer the macaroni to a colander, rinse under cold running water, and drain well. Stir macaroni into the reserved cheese sauce.
5. Pour the mixture into the prepared casserole dish. Sprinkle remaining 1 1/2 cups cheddar and 1/2 cup Gruyere or 1/4 cup pecorino Romano; scatter breadcrumbs over the top. Bake until browned on top, about 30 minutes. Transfer dish to a wire rack to cool for 5 minutes; serve.



*“For He
has satisfied
the thirsty soul,
and the
hungry soul
He has filled
with what
is good.”*



Showing forth the excellencies of Jesus Christ

Grace OPC

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Spurgeon Corner

*“Shall your brethren go to war,
and shall ye sit here?”*

Numbers 32:6

Kindred has its obligations. The Reubenites and Gadites would have been unbrotherly if they had claimed the land which had been conquered, and had left the rest of the people to fight for their portions alone. We have received much by means of the efforts and sufferings of the saints in years gone by, and if we do not make some return to the church of Christ by giving her our best energies, we are unworthy to be enrolled in her ranks. Others are combating the errors of the age manfully, or excavating perishing ones from amid the ruins of the fall, and if we fold our hands in idleness we had need be warned, lest the curse of Meroz fall upon us. The Master of the vineyard saith, “Why stand ye here all the day

idle?” What is the idler’s excuse? Personal service of Jesus becomes all the more the duty of all because it is cheerfully and abundantly rendered by some. The toils of devoted missionaries and fervent ministers shame us if we sit still in indolence. Shrinking from trial is the temptation of those who are at ease in Zion: they would fain escape the cross and yet wear the crown; to them the question for this evening’s meditation is very applicable. If the most precious are tried in the fire, are we to escape the crucible? If the diamond must be vexed upon the wheel, are we to be made perfect without suffering? Who hath commanded the wind to cease from blowing because our bark is on the deep? Why and wherefore should we be treated better than our Lord? The firstborn felt the rod, and why not the younger brethren? It is a cowardly pride which would choose a downy pillow and a silken couch for a soldier of the cross. Wiser far is he who, being first resigned to the divine will, groweth by the energy of grace to be pleased with it, and so learns to gather lilies at the cross foot, and, like Samson, to find honey in the lion.

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Evening, August 5th, C.H. Spurgeon

Front Page Concluded...

personal marathon – keep going, Brian, keep running!

The great advantage to the runner in this race is the frontrunner. Jesus has run the course already – he is our front-runner. Keep your eyes fixed upon him who is the author and perfecter of faith. Look at his joy as he endures the cross, despising its shame, and finishing his race. See him sitting down at the right hand of God. He is your grand encouragement – the one who will carry you through to the end.

Sometimes at the end of marathons the runners come wobbling across the finish line.

Their fellow runners quickly support them and keep them upright as they finish. That’s likely how it will be for most of us. Running this race is exhausting – our strength almost fails. Especially during those last miles, it is a test of our endurance. Yet by the power of Christ, we can and we shall finish. We may need much support as we finish our race, but God is faithful to uphold us.

So don’t give up – though you may feel like it. Don’t stop running, and don’t throw in the towel. Run with perseverance!