

The Race Set Before ME

I. Slide1 **Announce:**

- A. Slide2 Rick & Lorrain Deleon - Divorce Care. Starts next mon.
- B. Slide3 Baby Dedication - Josh & Cheryl Angel. James Titus.
- C. Slide4 Those who *Pre-Ordered* a DVD from JM4 you can pickup at the info booth.
- D. Slide5 Wed Night - Steve Gumaer Founder of *Partners Relief & Development*.
- E. Slide6 Prayer:

II. Slide7 **Intro:**

- A. April 17th, 2000 Kelly ran the 104th Boston Marathon w/16,000 others. I found it interesting that for **most**, running it wasn't about **winning** the Boston (only maybe a few dozen are real hopefuls), it was all about "**finishing the race & winning their own personal race**".
 - 1. Slide8 It was about **doing what they set out to do**.
 - 2. The Key was **staying in the race...all the way to the end**. And, **doing their best... all along the way**. [Runners call it their P.B.]
- B. Scene change in Hebrews - Our focus is now brought to a sports stadium where a **distance marathon** is being run. * **Read Text**
 - 1. Slide9 The Runners = the readers of this epistle (including **us**) who run this grueling race.
 - 2. The Race = life itself [ps: it's not a 100yr. dash]
 - 3. The Goal = the **end** of life, whether it be **death or the rapture**.
 - 4. The Venue = a great stadium.
 - 5. The Crowd = many witnesses (including ch.11 saints & Jesus). The spiritual athletes of the past (Gold medal winners).
 - a) We gain **Inspiration & Motivation** from the saints of old, *through* their **dedication & perspiration**.
 - b) These witnesses bear testimony the race **can be** run **successfully** & the rewards are great.
 - c) **Unlike the end of Kelly's race** where, being 1 of the *coldest Boston races ever*, I let down my wife more then ever, we couldn't get over to her. *Where were you?* [she was bluer than a Smurf]
 - (1) I wish I had it to do over again.
 - d) See, **the End** of the race in heaven is **the best** (we will be greeted w/a warm blanket, kiss & hugs, from Jesus Himself)

III. Slide10 **LET US LAY ASIDE (1a)**

- A. With all these guys watching don't you want to run well? Finish strong?
 - 1. Picture them along the last mile with their encouragements.

- a) **Example:** At Boston (diff. groups, wheel chair competition)
 - b) *“You can do it!” “You’re going to make it!” “Strong kick!”*
 - 2. What would they be yelling to **you** in **your** spiritual race if you could hear them today?
 - a) *“Get off your...couch!” “Don’t just sit there!” “Quit looking back!”*
 - 3. **See, salvation is free, but seeing God’s glory will cost you everything.**
- B. **Slide11 EVERY SIN**
- C. It must be cast aside immediately upon recognition, as it springs from its ambush to entrap.
- D. **Ensnarers** – Picture the *Venus Fly-trap*...
- 1. As the fly lands, the plants sticky hair-like fingers touch its wings. The more the fly struggles to be set free it only gets more coated w/the sticky substance. Then the leaf closes in 1 second...then the next few hours its life is sucked out of him. In the end what is left is only its empty dry carcass.
 - 2. And so our end if we play with sin in our lives.
- E. Remember, what might be a vice for one, might not be even a temptation to another.
- 1. To 1 it might be sensuality, to another jealousy. (Dishonesty, temper, covetousness, criticism, laziness, hatred, lust, Pride)
 - 2. Which is your Achilles’ heel?
- F. *However, not every weight/hindrance is sin...*
- G. **Slide12 EVERY WEIGHT**
- H. A **hindrance** is something, otherwise good, that weighs you down spiritually.
- 1. **It could be:** a friendship, an association, an event, a place, a habit, a pleasure, an entertainment, an honor.
 - 2. Is there a **place** you need to stay away from? Because of your past sins acquainted w/it. Is there a **person** you need to stay away from? Because of your past relationship w/them.
- I. He is speaking of what is unnecessary/nonessential. One **cannot run well** in an **overcoat, tuxedo, or** in **skinny jeans**. (...you need *Dolphin shorts*, ha!)
- J. An athlete in ancient times would **lay aside unnecessary weight** 2 ways:
- 1. **By removing his extra flesh** (bulk, mass, fat)
 - 2. **He would also remove all of his clothes** (maybe Dolphins aren’t that bad)
- K. Each runner must honestly decide what is **unessential** or **excessive**.
- 1. Unfortunately, many denominations would be happy to come up w/**that list** for you.

2. In this world we have **legitimate pleasures**. Ravi described it as, “*A legitimate pleasure is something that refreshes along the journey w/o distracting from your ultimate goal.*”

a) This is different from running with your **car keys, can of pepper spray, cell phone**.

L. Again, what is clearly **sin** allows of no individual choice, **but here** we are to consider **unnecessary baggage**.

1. **Slide13 Robot Camel Jockey’s** (a weight issue). *I thought this was hilarious.*

I learned camel racing has been a tradition in Arab countries for 1000’s of years.

Then I learned there has been some 5-40,000 children trafficked to be camel jockeys as young as **2 yrs old**, **best age & weight? 4 yrs old!** (starved to be as light as possible) **UAE 1st to outlaw this, started using robots.** [*I’m so glad they laid aside this weight/stolen children*]

2. **Kelly said at the beginning of the Boston there was a bunch of free food** in their tent where they waited for the start (bagels, cream cheese, fruit, etc.) & She said the people were pigging out! [she never eats before she runs]

a) **What is impeding your running? What is slowing you down? What is getting in the way of your Christian faith-race?**

(1) **The mundane, not making the time for intimacy w/God, priorities, busyness, lack of contentment of God, fast pace culture, working too much, or playing too hard, peer pressure, ambition of other things, hobbies, laziness, pre-occupied w/figuring out your future? [Away with it! (*shake it into the fire*)]**

IV. **Slide14 LET US RUN (1b)**

A. **Slide15a WITH ENDURANCE**

B. **Run with perseverance** - in 1981 **Bill Broadhurst** entered the Pepsi challenge 10,000m race in Omaha, Nebraska. Surgery 10 years earlier for an *aneurysm in the brain* had left him paralyzed on his left side. Now, on that misty July morning, he stands with 1,200 lithe men and women at the starting line. **The gun sounds!** The crown surges forward. Bill throws his stiff left leg forward, pivots on it as his foot hits the ground. **Its slow plop – plop – plop rhythm** seems to mock him as the pack races into the distance. Sweat rolls Down his face, pain pierces his ankle, but he keeps going. Some of the runners complete the race in about 30 minutes, **but** 2 hours & 20 minutes later Bill reaches the finish line. A man approaches from a small group of remaining bystanders. Though exhausted, Bill recognizes him from pictures in the newspaper.

Slide15b He is **Bill Rogers**, the famous marathon runner, who then drapes his newly won metal around Bill’s neck. **Bill Broadhurst’s** finish was as glorious as that of the worlds greatest – though he finished last. **Why?** Because he ran with **perseverance**.¹

C. **The race is not for sprinters who burn out after 200 meters.**

1. It’s pushing through the pain where every muscles screams, “**stop**” “**ok, that’s enough**”, “**your fit now**”. **And** you get to the other side where its now **smooth running**.

¹ Kent Hughes, Hebrews, Vol.2, pg.160,161

- D. It is for the **faithful plodders**. *Fast or slow, strong or weak*. All must **persevere**.
- E. **Slide16 YOUR RACE** - *The race set before us* (i.e. individually)
- F. We each have a **specific course** mapped out for us.
1. Some are **straight**, others many **twists**; some have **flat** land, others **hilly**; some **low** altitude, some **high**; all are **long**, some are **longer**.
 2. **But each of us** can **finish** the race *set out before us*.
 3. Then we too can say as Paul, *I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.*

V. **Slide17 LET US FOCUS (2)**

- A. **Actually this is 2-fold**: It encompasses both the *looking away* from one thing & *concentrating* on another.
1. Especially in a race, it's **not** falling into the **looking back trap** that killed Lot's wife in her feeble race, where she ended up **turning into a pillar of salt**.
 2. Which as 1 Sunday School boy, when hearing of this story said, *that's nothing, my mom turned into a telephone pole once!*
- B. **Slide18** On August 7th, at the 1954 *British Empire and Commonwealth Games* in Vancouver, **Roger Bannister of England** competed against **John Landy** of Australia for the first time in a race billed as *The Miracle Mile*. They were the only two men in the world to have broken the 4-minute barrier, with **Landy** still holding the world record. When they came into the last turn the crowd roared, so loud Landy couldn't hear John's steps any longer. **Landy looked over his left shoulder** to gauge Bannister's position and Bannister burst past him on the **right**; Bannister won in 3 min 58.8 s, with Landy 0.8 s behind in 3 min 59.6 s.
1. A larger-than-life bronze sculpture of the two men at this moment was created in 1967 from a photograph by Vancouver Sun photographer Charlie Warner. Regarding this sculpture, Landy quipped that *"While Lot's wife was turned into a pillar of salt for looking back, I am probably the only one ever turned into bronze for looking back."*
- C. **Slide19 ON JESUS**
- D. Who is *the supreme example* of the preceding chapter of *One of faith*.
1. **As a hunter** keeps his animal in his scope's *cross-hairs*. **As a baseball player** keeps his eyes on the *ball*. **As a parent** keeps their eye on their *toddler in a crowd*. **As a carpenter**, on the *front edge* of his saw blade.
- E. **Not looking unto** self – *"I don't repent enough...I don't believe enough...I don't feel worthy enough."*

1. It is true we don't **have** any of these, **but** it is wrong to look for any in ourselves.
So, It isn't, "*looking unto Brian....*"

F. Its' learning to be *Christocentric!*

1. It's *looking to Jesus* who is the **goal** of our journey & the **companion** along the way.
2. It's **only looking unto Jesus** who is the **originator & the finisher** of our faith.

G. **Slide20 ON JESUS' ATTITUDE**

- H. And His attitude was *joy*. So, what was the **joy** set before him?...*namely*, of presently after sitting down at the right hand of the throne of God; **including** besides His own personal joy, the joy of sitting there as a *Prince and Savior*, to give **repentance** and remission of sins, for our salvation.

VI. **Slide21 LET US CONSIDER JESUS' RACE (3)**

- A. His race? His endurance of opposition? (**well**, Pharisees, Herodian's, Sadducees, Caiaphas, Herod, Pilate, Judas to name a few)
1. And of course he handled each situation like **velvet-steel**.
- B. **Lest we become weary & discouraged** (more sports lingo). To be **weary & faint**.
1. **The 1st**, referring to **a sudden breakdown** in endurance. [*i.e. hit the wall*, or even stop]
 2. **The 2nd**, **a more gradual relaxation** of vigilance. [*i.e. looking around & daydreaming, instead of racing*]
- C. Are you becoming weary in your race? **Listen** to the shouts of *encouragement*. **Look** down the road & see the crowd lining the streets...
1. **There's Stephen** (black-n-blue & bleeding from his stoning).
There's John the Baptist (holding his head in his hands). **There's Isaiah** (cut in 1/2, *beside himself*)
There's Luke (who was hanged from a tree).
There's Mark (flesh hook marks still in his thighs from where they drug him to his death).
There's Barnabas (who was char-broiled). **There's Peter** (still upside down).
There's Thomas (baked well done in an oven, then stabbed thru w/spears).
There's Matthew (who was crucified, stoned, & decapitated).
And there's Jesus (with the marks in his hands, feet, side, head, back).
 2. **Don't give up saints for you have not yet...** (**read** vs.4)
 - a) Are you bleeding yet???
 3. **Slide22** (msg) Do you see what this means - all these pioneers who blazed the way, all these veterans cheering us on? It means we'd better get on with it. Strip down, start running - and never quit! No extra spiritual fat, no parasitic sins. Keep your eyes on Jesus, who both began and finished this race we're in. Study how he did it. Because he never lost sight of where he

was headed - that exhilarating finish in and with God - he could put up with anything along the way: Cross, shame, whatever. And now he's there, in the place of honor, right alongside God. When you find yourselves flagging/weaker in your faith, go over that story again, item by item, that long litany of hostility he plowed through. That will shoot adrenaline into your souls.