

Perseverance

“run with perseverance”

Foundation

Bible passage : Hebrews 12.1 & Luke 8.4-15

This unit is intended to be followed by a unit drawing on Hebrews 12 verse 2 but based on Jesus' words on the cross “It is finished”. If it is to be used on its own it may make sense to draw in Heb. 12.2 as well.

The parable of the Sower is a well-known parable of Jesus and can be used, or misused, in various ways. For this unit we are considering how the good soil shows the need to persevere:

“As for that (seed) in the good soil, they are those who, hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patience.”

The need to the hold fast to the word and to bear fruit with patience are both about perseverance, also sometimes called endurance.

For some, Jesus says, the word of the gospel makes no impact. Others are impacted by it for a while but for various reason their apparent faith does not endure. But if the word truly takes root that will be seen as people persevere in faith, both holding fast to what they have heard and bearing fruit. The same idea can be found in 1 Cor. 15.2, Heb 10.23 etc. The fruits could mean the fruit of the Holy Spirit in a changed life, or the way in which people want to share the good news with others, or both.

Hebrews 12.1 famously uses the picture of a long-distance running race to illustrate the idea of perseverance or endurance:

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



This is an image that most will immediately understand. When running any distance, it can be tempting just to give up. What is more if a person is encumbered, they will be slowed down. Modern athletes, knowing the significance of even cut down their clothing and it is possible the writer had in mind the ancient Greek games where men competed naked! Sin has the same impact, it clings and hinders people in running the race and so for this reason, and many others, the wise person will seek to lay it aside.

It can be easy to start out on something, but hard to keep going. Jesus warned people that there is a cost to following Him and spoke about counting the cost before beginning. The cost is not just for a brief time, following Jesus requires perseverance, throughout life. But one of the points about the witnesses spoken of in Heb 12.1 is that those who have gone before are an encouragement to us. The same is true of following Jesus, it takes perseverance.

“let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us”



Many things are easy to start but hard to keep going. Following Jesus is not easy and requires perseverance.