

We are in the midst of the holidays. The days between Christmas and the New Year are often unfocused and undirected. Let's use the freedom of this week to purposefully focus our attention on the Lord!

The conclusion is the most significant aspect of an effort. The conclusion of a book or movie is the most important scene. The final score of an athletic contest defines the entire effort. Let's finish 2020 with praise & thanksgiving on our lips and God's word in our heart.

We must guard our hearts. Perseverance and patience has been required of us this year. When we are weary we are more vulnerable to despair and discouragement. It is more important than ever to remind one another that God is our source of strength. He is our deliverer. Our assignment is to stand, to pray and to believe!

When the adversary reminds you of your frailty, your vulnerability and previous failures; begin to declare what God has said about you. Persist in your prayers and proclamations until the heaviness departs and the joy of the Lord fills your heart!

Reading: Jonah --- It is a short book and a familiar story. The outcome is a nation repenting and God showing mercy --- a need we certainly can understand. The focus of the story is the reluctant, often misguided prophet. Jonah reminds the reader that God works through imperfect vessels.

Morning Proclamation

Hebrews 12:1-3 (NIV)

¹ Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. ² Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. ³ Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

Many have preceded me in a life of faith and obedience, I am not alone in my choices to honor Almighty God with my life. I choose to throw off every hindrance and to repent of all sin that might entangle so that I may run with perseverance the race marked out for me. Jesus is the author and perfecter of my faith. He is my strength and sustainer as complete my course. I will engage each day with the determination to honor the Lord and do His will!

Mid-day Proclamation

1 Corinthians 9:24-27 (NIV)

²⁴ Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. ²⁵ Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. ²⁶ Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. ²⁷ No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

Matthew 7:13-14 (NIV)

¹³ "Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. ¹⁴ But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.

Through God's grace I have found the door which leads to life. I will pursue a life which pleases the One who called me. I will run my race with the determined self-control required to gain the prize. There is a crown which will last forever at the end of the contest. I will listen to instructions given, respond to the counsel provided by the Spirit and stand in the grace of the One who called me. May God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven, amen.

Evening Proclamation

Revelation 3:14-22 (NIV)

¹⁴ "To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God's creation. ¹⁵ I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! ¹⁶ So, because you are lukewarm--neither hot nor cold--I am about to spit you out of my mouth. ¹⁷ You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.' But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. ¹⁸ I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see. ¹⁹ Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest, and repent. ²⁰ Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me. ²¹ To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne. ²² He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

I accept the counsel of "the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God's creation." I know that nothing is hidden from him. I repent of my indifference and ambivalence. In pride I have imagined I was self-sufficient and had no needs. I was unaware of my desperate circumstances and stood arrogantly declaring my own righteousness. I repent. In Christ alone can I face the future triumphantly. Only through blood of Jesus am I cleansed, justified and sanctified. It is through the blood Jesus that I have been redeemed, made holy and set apart to God. Thank you for disciplining me in your great love. I choose to overcome, in the name of my Lord and King, Jesus of Nazareth.