**“Run for Christ!”**

**1 Cor. 9:24-27**

**(Notes based on the sermon by Pastor Scott Irwin, Hayden Bible Church, 1/19/25)**

 The ancient Greeks ran a relay race at the Isthmian Games (near Corinth) where each participant bore a lighted torch. They said to one another, “Let those who have the light, pass it on.” This is the perfect phrase for today’s lesson: **Let those who have the Light, pass it on!** Think back: did someone pass that Light to you? Are you running for Christ, looking to pass that Light on to someone else? In today’s scripture, Paul gives three instructions for those who would run to honor Jesus:

* Try your best! Run to win!
* Focus on the prize
* Discipline yourself for victory

We each make our choices based on how strongly we feel, giving priority to what is most important to us. For those who follow Jesus and have been saved by His grace, the priority is to run according to His example and His teachings.

 What kind of runner are we talking about? One who tries her best. One who perseveres to the end. One who runs to win. One who truly believes that Jesus died for her sins. One who loves Him and loves others and lives a life of obedience seeking to glorify Him (Matt. 7:21-24;

1 John 4:20-21). One who knows she has an impact on other racers (believers) and on spectators (nonbelievers). Your race affects everyone around you (Matt. 5:16; Rom. 14:19). You were created to bring glory to God (1 Cor. 10:31). You represent Christ to the world. You run with His name written on you. Don’t give up (1 Tim. 1:18-19)!

 Keep your focus on the prize: the honor of winning. In ancient Greece the honor was a wreath of pine boughs. For us, it is the honor that we can bring to our King. Staying focused on the prize involves exercising self-control (Prov. 3:5-6). It involves laying aside any encumbrance and running with endurance (Heb. 12:1-2). It involves not looking back (Phil. 3:13-14). Our prize is something we give away! No greater gift can you give someone than the gift of how to be saved! So press on, knowing that your righteousness has been won by Christ. Press on for the sake of others and for God’s ultimate glory.

 Discipline yourself for victory! In the NASB “discipline my body” is rendered as “buffet my body.” My older brother uses this as his excuse to regularly go through the buffet lines in Las Vegas. I think this may be a misinterpretation!!! A better interpretation includes regularly applying the Word of God to your life. It involves not giving in to our desires (1 Cor. 6:12-13). It involves seeking Christ with all of our hearts and not giving in to fleshly lusts (1 Pet. 2:11-12). Remember: your running affects others, and your stumbling affects others (both believers and nonbelievers). You have been **made righteous** by Christ’s substitutionary death on the cross. Now you should **live rightly**, because you are not under the law, but under grace (Rom. 6:12-14). You are lights to the world, so do all without grumbling or disputing (Phil. 2:14-16). We all want to say with Paul that we finished the course, we kept the faith (2 Tim. 4:7). So live your life for the sake of the gospel. RUN FOR CHRIST!

*Father, You have called us out of darkness into Your marvelous Light. May our lives make an impact for You and bring glory to You in all that we do. We want to RUN for You!*

**QUESTIONS**:

1. What priorities guide most people in their decision-making?
2. As Christians, we’ve gone from the “rat race” to a completely new race. What is our goal in this new race we are in?
3. What pulls us away from seeking God with all of our heart?
4. Read Heb. 12:1-2 once again. We are to run this race with endurance. How is that done?

**“Come Thou Fount” (Robinson)**

Come, Thou Fount of every blessing
Tune my heart to sing Thy grace
Streams of mercy never ceasing
Call for songs of loudest praise
Teach me some melodious sonnet
Sung by flaming tongues above
Praise the name! I’m fixed upon it
Name of Thy redeeming love

Hitherto Thy love has blessed me
Thou hast brought me to this place
And I know Thy hand will bring me
Safely home by Thy good grace
Jesus sought me when a stranger
Wandering from the fold of God
He, to rescue me from danger
Interposed His precious blood

Oh to grace how great a debtor
Daily I’m constrained to be
Let Thy goodness, like a fetter
Bind my wandering heart to Thee
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it
Prone to leave the God I love
Here’s my heart, oh take and seal it
Seal it for Thy courts above