

Tuesday, September 27, 2005 – What are You Running With Part 2

I know you know that in life as we are running to a greater career, higher education, a more fulfilling life, a more blended family, etc.....it all constitutes as a race....the problem is that sometimes we feel as though we are racing against time.....according to the world's standards of racing towards success translates into having a corner office by such and such an age, having children by a certain age, owning a home, and then selling that one and owning your dream home, having the car of your dreams (until you see a better one), obtaining recognition and position in an organization (be it non-profit or for profit)....it's all wrapped around what one perceives.....for some, having a greater career doesn't mean more money, but more opportunity to choose how you make the money and to the amount of time you choose to spend with those whom you care the most about (some people thrive off of being a workaholic, while others working isn't the preferred race of choice). For others having children, getting married, raising their children and having grandchildren. it doesn't matter, it's all a race.....we only have so much time to "win" but what if the race you think you are running is not for your "victory" but for the benefit of others.....I never really thought about this until just now.....our spiritual races are for our benefit is true....if you live according to God's plan and do as He commands, then you will be the first beneficiary of your race...but other people who see you race.....yes you were blessed to "see" someone who ran their race with patience and won.....this is interesting.....remember the great cloud of witnesses spoken of a few words prior to the "race with patience" part....can your testimony be used by someone else under the category "witness" (our life truly should be a series of testimonies of what God has done for us , with us, to us, because of us, around us, through us, etc...)

This is why *you* are going through life with Jesus.....it's to show to others that this life can be lived through Jesus Christ successfully. So the next time you are running with patience, remember that your race is being observed and used as an encouraging tool for someone coming behind you. Maybe this is why it say lay aside every weight.....through your life (and mine) we should be able to see some things that you used to carry around and how you've been able to release them and lay them aside.not so you can pick them up, but so that someone else can go by and see hatred laid aside, ignorance laid aside, fearfulness laid aside, hopelessness laid aside, uncertainty about tomorrow laid aside, wickedness laid aside, bigotry laid aside, indifference laid aside, bad attitudes laid aside, lying laid aside.....and the sin (funny how it *says the sin*) it's because regardless of what you choose to label it....the bottom line is that it is all the sin of death.....

I don't usually write long ones but this one is extremely important because it helps put life into perspective. No, no one wants to experience losing it all like the evacuees of hurricane Katrina and Rita. No one wants to hear that his or her loved one has died of some disease (despite all of the prayers and faith, this time God said "no"...yes, it hurts...but this is also part of the race).

Let me share something with you.....my mother (who was also my pastor for 14 years) was handed one of those dreaded diagnosis of breast cancer. Among other major illnesses, this one was a serious blow. Now she was a prayer warrior and a woman of strong faith...but she prayed a prayer that I will never forget...she said, "Lord, I want you to heal me and I know You can, BUT if You can use me with cancer, then I am willing. I

just don't want any pain." And He responded in kind, by allowing her to go through radiation (she didn't take chemotherapy). Anyway, God used this method to take her into remission. The cancer came back two more times over a 10 year period. But each time the Lord raised her up...and she continued to serve as the pastor of our church (in January, 2002, she'd had a single mastectomy and recovered well despite the fact that the doctor had said in November 2002 that she might not live until Christmas 2002).. In January, 2003, she was given the news that the breast cancer had returned and had now spread to the right breast. The doctor said 6 months this time. She said God knows what He is doing and I will die when God says so..(this had been her motto for 10 years now).....so we took the doctor's words to the Lord in prayer. We were looking for a church building (we'd been renting a building for some time).....in June 2003, we found a building and started the purchasing process....which took until October 25th to complete. Now in order to understand what happened next, you must know that my mother's prayer was for the Lord to make sure that "her babies" as she called her church members had a church home. By October, she was starting to have problems....until then she was able to move about on her own, despite having had a major stroke, high blood pressure, diabetes and breast cancer. We signed the papers for the church on Friday, October 23rd and on that Sunday, she preached a message titled "Coming in on the boards".....she went home and on November 24, 2003 she finished her race in Jesus!!!

Now I said all of that to say that she taught me that the race remains, regardless of the circumstances, you still have to lay aside every weight. The adversary tried hard to make cancer a weight to stop her from *running with patience* the race set before her. Like I said yesterday, you have to be focused to finish your race.

I learned from my mother's race, that nothing can stop you from running the race with patience.....I learned from my mother's race that death is not terrible when you are running with patience that heaven is the reward. I learned from my mother's race that not being healed still requires focus on Jesus. I learned that there is no reason to throw up my hands and run away from my race because I don't like the course.....I thank God for having a "witness" that to live is Christ but to die is gain.....what will you teach those as you are running with patience your race?

Running with Jesus.....I've got to run....there is no reason, no hardship, no trial too tough to stop running with patience the race that is set before....if you get weary, frustrated, hurt, beaten, bruised, please keep on running.....it's worth it for you and for all those that will call you part of their great cloud of witnesses!!!

What are you running with?

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about **with** so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and **let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Hebrews 12:1 (KJV)**