

## FOCUS

### Intro

#### Christian subculture & the lingo of “walking”

#### Hebrews 12:1-3

### RUN! (v. 1)

- Christianity is a prescribed race
- Danger of sleeping on the track

**3:12**

**4:1**

#### Running with history

*“Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses” (v. 1)*

- We are connected to a story that God is writing.
- Christianity is entirely opposed to today’s isolated, individualistic spirituality. Our running this race is inextricably linked to history.
- We need the witnesses...and they need us as well. They are waiting for us to finish the race.

**11:39-40**

### Running with freedom

*"let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely" (v.1)*

- Whatever takes away your radicalness, whatever throws water on your passion, whatever burdens your mind and heart and distracts you from the Lord, this passage is saying to get rid of it.
- Gospel-centeredness does not imply a casual approach to life. A robust vision of the gospel implies a *revolutionary* approach to life.

### Running with endurance

*"let us run with endurance the race that is set before us" (v. 1)*

- We live in a society today that is short on endurance. The problem is that we can take that mindset into our Christianity.
- The book of Hebrews was written to tired Christians. They had begun to second-guess whether bearing the name of Christ was truly worth it.

**10:32-36**

- Have you given up on growth? Do you have need of endurance? Our text's solution is to reintroduce you to your Savior!

## CONSIDER! (v.2-3)

- There is a specific orientation—a particular focus—for our lives as Christians, and that is Jesus Christ and his gospel.

### Looking to Jesus

- A call for concentrated attention on the person of Jesus Christ.

**3:1**

- The book of Hebrews represents this author's pastoral efforts to convince his readers of the transcendent importance of Jesus.

**1:1-4**

#### Portrait of Christ in Hebrews:

- ✚ The final and decisive revelation of God (1:1-2)
- ✚ The creator and sustainer of everything (1:3)
- ✚ Superior and more excellent than anyone (1:4)
- ✚ The unique and reigning Son of God (1:5-13)
- ✚ The perfect Savior and the conqueror of Satan (2:10-18)
- ✚ More glorious than Moses (3:1-6)
- ✚ The Great High Priest who passed through the heavens (4:1-5:10)
- ✚ High Priest in the order of Melchizedek (7:1-28)
- ✚ Inaugurator of a better covenant (8:1-13)
- ✚ The final and sufficient sacrifice for sin (9:11-10:18)

- The distinctive feature of Christianity is Christ.

"The object of Christian faith is Christ clothed with his gospel"  
–**John Calvin**, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, III.iii.6

“Growth in godliness must conscientiously center on Christ. In the believer’s self-consciousness the engine of increased degrees of holiness is fixing one’s eyes on Christ and his finished work. The wise orchestration of the Father and the internal sanctifying influences of the Spirit are equally necessary in the total picture of spiritual growth, but neither constitutes the critical object of contemplation in the way Christ does. It is in Jesus Christ that we most clearly and objectively view the heart of the gospel. ...*And it is this gospel that generates growth.* ...The gospel that Christ died for our sins is the daily meat and drink of growing Christians. It is not a ticket in, to be torn up; it is the air breathed, to be increasingly enjoyed”  
-**Dane Ortlund**, “Christocentrism: An Asymmetrical Trinitarianism?” *Themelios* 34.3 (2009), 320

- Looking to Jesus is not an experience that is accomplished by emptying the mind. It is accomplished by *filling* the mind with specific, historical truths about him.

### Remembering the gospel

- This book is repeatedly drawing our focus to the gospel-work of Christ as the engine for our endurance.

**2:9**

**4:14**

- Nothing produces Christian growth but the gospel, because nothing produces *Christians* but the gospel.

➤ **Christianity & the cross of Christ**

*“...who endured the cross”*

*There is one thing that makes you a Christian.*

“Paul was utterly mastered, held captive, by one great scene in history: a cross on Golgotha and on it the Son of God who loved us and gave himself for us”

-**John Piper**, “Only New Creation Counts,” (1989)

*The cross is not just the ticket in. It is the theater of God’s love.*

**Romans 5:8**

➤ **The functional benefits of Christ's exaltational ministry**

*"...and is seated at the right hand of God"*

*Hebrews presents a portrait of Christ as one who is currently involved in the life of his church.*

**7:25**

**Continuing in faith**

- The purpose of the exhortation to consider Jesus is to prevent believers from growing weary in the faith.

**Colossians 1:28**

- *"When I run, I feel his pleasure."*

**Romans 9:16**