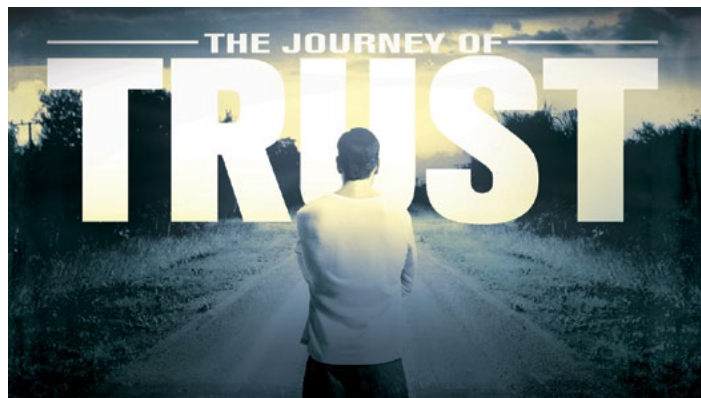


BEYOND THE WEEKEND

For the sermon on May 18-19, 2013
"Finishing the Race"



Welcome to *Beyond the Weekend*! The experiences below are designed to connect with the weekend message and fit a variety of learning styles. They provide additional readings from other sections of Scripture such as the Old Testament, Psalms, Gospels, and Epistles (letters). Take 20-30 minutes each day and enjoy your pursuit of God!



Prefer e-mail? *Beyond the Weekend* is also available via daily e-mails, which include links to the Scripture (both written and audio), the sermon video, and a weekly blog post. To sign up for the daily e-mails, go to adabible.org/btw.

Day 1 Acts 20.18-24 | Testifying to God's Grace

You know how I lived the whole time I was with you... you know that I have not hesitated to preach anything that would be helpful to you but have taught you publicly and from house to house. I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus (Acts 20.18-21).

Paul's mission was to testify to the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. God commissioned him to step out of his comfort zone (as a Jew) and go to a decidedly different culture and people, the Gentiles. It was there that he made his greatest impact on the world. This was not easy or without hardship. But it didn't matter. The mission was too important.

God calls us to the same mission—to give witness to a world desperately in need of his redemption. It is our task to communicate the magnitude of God's grace and our need to turn to him in repentance. Today, write your obituary as if you were to die today. How much of it would include your boldness about God's grace to others, whether in word or deed? A suggested book on the topic of God's grace is *My Utmost For His Highest*, by Oswald Chambers. Next to the Bible, this is one of the most influential books for gaining a sense of the magnitude of God's grace and our need to follow him.

Day 2 Luke 5.27-32 | Repentance

I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance (Luke 5.32).

Repentance is turning, walking 180 degrees in the opposite direction. The Greek word is *metanoia*, which literally means "to change one's mind." When we repent, we think and act differently. We are transformed.

Spiritually, repentance involves a godly remorse for sin or for a life gone astray. It is different from shame, which is when one feels bad for simply being bad. Repentance, rather, is feeling genuine sorrow for committing some action or deed specifically—sorrow that it dishonored God and/or hurt others. We are sorry to have lied or cheated someone or to have taken advantage of someone. It has a definite object, like guilt.

When we repent, God removes our guilt and makes us one with him (Romans 3.21-26; 5.1-2). In this way, repentance begins our life with God. And yet, repentance doesn't end there. God is calling us to live our whole lives in repentance—living every day in constant awareness of God's grace and being able to say, "Lord, I am so sorry," and then acting differently as a result. Today, if you have not repented of your sin, do so. God's grace is freely able to save you completely (1 John 1.8-10). Dietrich Bonhoeffer offers powerful words about what it really means to follow Christ in *Discipleship*. Read Chapters 1-5 and you won't be the same.

Day 3 1 Corinthians 15.1-6 | The Gospel

What is the gospel? If someone asked you about it, how would you answer them? Gospel means “good news,” but what is that good news? There is no clearer definition of the gospel than that found in 1 Corinthians 15.1-6. Read this passage today and learn to summarize the gospel in a few words. Then, be ready to share this good news: that Christ rescued the world by dying for our sins, being raised from the dead, and offering new life to all who follow him through faith (a new life that begins today and continues forever and ever).

God is good. Jesus is King. *That* is good news! Read Scot McKnight’s, *The King Jesus Gospel*, a book providing real clarity on the nature of the Gospel.

Day 4 Hebrews 11-12.2 | Faith and Finishing Well

Faith is trust. Saving faith is the ultimate trust that, through Christ, God has saved you from your sins (Romans 3.21-25). Hebrews 11.1 describes faith this way: “Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.” Do you have assurance about what you do not see? What do you need in order to know and/or trust God’s promises more fully?

Scripture calls us to look to Jesus, “the perfecter of faith” (Hebrews 12.2). He is both the source of new life and the model for it. Follow him, and your faith will grow and finish strong. To take the first step, remember that each decision you make ultimately shapes the next several years of your life. Your decisions today will determine who you will be in 20 years. If you don’t want to be cynical and bitter when you are 70, the work you do now is key. Today, read Hebrews 11-12.2 and consider what changes you need to make to finish well. Read *After You Believe*, by N.T. Wright. This book is a wonderful depiction of how to build a life that is made for the long haul.

Day 5 Daniel 3 | Decisive

The story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego illustrates the kind of commitment that God calls each of us to pursue. Their faith was tested and God was honored. “If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it, and he will deliver us from Your Majesty’s hand. **But even if he does not**, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up” (Daniel 3.17-18).

Notice it says, “but even if he does not.” How complete is your trust in God? Are you willing to trust him even if he doesn’t “come through” for you? Have you committed yourself to completely trusting God through all hardships, discomforts, and trials? Today, discern how decisive your faith really is and then commit to God, through a time of prayer, the level of obedience you are willing to offer him. For an easy-to-read treatment of the nature of the Christian life, read *Radical* by David Platt.

MORE

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Small Group Discussion | For a discussion guide related to the sermon, e-mail rcorlett@adabile.org.

Questions or Comments | Contact Tim Nelson, pastor of spiritual formation at tnelson@adabile.org.

BTW Blog

Ada Bible Church staff and leaders share how God is meeting them through the sermons. BTW blog posts are hosted on Sabea, our blog for spiritual formation, and go live on Wednesdays.

This week we hear from Jon Grunden, student ministries, Cascade Campus.

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