

ONLINE BIBLE STUDY HEBREWS 12:1-3 'CALL FOR SPIRITUAL EXERCISE'

IBC Eindhoven, 13 December 2020

INTRODUCTION

- * Enjoy watching sports? Enjoy doing sports? Physical health. Or just the inner drive to win...
- * Perhaps the idea of doing sports makes you tired already. You not really fancy a message on Sunday morning on spiritual sports activities; already so many demands in life... now church adds to all these....
BUT PLEASE BEAR WITH ME

RACE AS METAPHOR OF FAITH - HEBREWS 12:1

1. 'The race marked out for us'
 - // 1 Corinthians 9:24-27; Galatians 2:2; Philippians 1:29f and 2:16; Colossians 1:29 and 2:1; 1 Timothy 6:12 and 2:5; 2 Timothy 4:6-8 *'I have fought the fight, I have finished the race.'*
2. 'Surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses'
 - >> Hebrews 11 (= a sermon on Hebrews 10:35-39)
 - Amphitheatre - witnesses cheering us - cheering is hearing their testimonies
 - All kinds of testimonies: Abel, Abraham, Moses - seeing the Invisible (11:27), persecution (11:36-38)
3. 'Let us throw off...'
 - Everything that hinders us = excessive bodily weight; for this one needs to discipline one self for a longer period of time
 - Sin that so easily entangles us = parasitic sins (The Message)
 - Discipline as in 1 Corinthians 9:25, 27

LET US FIX OUR EYES ON JESUS - HEBREWS 12:2

1. Author and perfecter of our faith
 - He began and finished this race we're in
 - Faith-life is a mystery - through Jesus we have entered the sabbath rest for our souls // Hebrews 4:9-11 - we need to fight the good fight of faith and rest at the same time - spiritual growth doesn't come without personal effort - yet it is a gift from God (1 Corinthians 3:7) - would the bridge between our efforts and God's gift be realised by the church? The mystery is the union of Christ and the church - Ephesians 5:32
 - Also trusting Jesus' prayer for us: John 17:20f and Luke 22:31f
2. For the joy set before him - sat down at the right hand of God
 - Sat down - place of authority - King of kings and Lord of lords - Philippians 2:9-11
3. Endured the cross, scorning its shame
 - Fixing eyes on Jesus includes the view on the empty cross // the Lamb in Revelation 5 +++

WHO ENDURED SUCH OPPOSITION

- Those who condemned and crucified him, and who wanted to stop him - Matthew 16:22

SO THAT YOU WILL NOT GROW WEARY AND LOSE HEART

1. Facing high demands of modern society:
 - High expectations with technology having a negative effect, better, greater, perfection. Performance in a materialist society with focus on growth
 - Not meeting demands and expectations may be the reason you're not selected, you'll lose your job, your status, your income, etc.
 - These can draw us away from a walk in the Spirit - which is our calling for every day!
2. What about spiritual demands? - Matthew 11:28-30

INVITATION FOR REGULAR SPIRITUAL EXERCISE - 1 Thessalonians 5:17

1. BE STILL - become aware of the presence of God
2. GIVE THANKS - review past moments with thankfulness
3. REFLECT - become aware of emotions - give them to Jesus, including confession
4. PRAY - choose one feature - then exercise the art of letting go
5. HOPE - look towards the next moments with expectation

PSALM 16:11 *You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence with eternal pleasures at your right hand.'*

TIME FOR REFLECTION AND SHARING

1. Read Hebrews 11 and identify the different challenges these witnesses of faith had to meet
2. Share your burdens with each other and pray for each other (no problem solving!)