

**Outlines of the Messages  
for the International Chinese-speaking Conference  
February 10, 2024**

**GENERAL SUBJECT:**

**FIGHTING THE GOOD FIGHT, FINISHING THE COURSE,  
KEEPING THE FAITH, AND LOVING THE LORD'S APPEARING  
IN ORDER TO RECEIVE THE REWARD OF CHRIST  
AS THE CROWN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS**

**Message Two  
Finishing the Course**

CC, LH Hymns: 1206

Scripture Reading: 2 Tim. 4:7b; Acts 20:24; 1 Cor. 9:24-26; Heb. 12:1-2a

- 2 Tim 4:7b ... I have finished the course; ...
- Acts 20:24 But I consider my life of no account as if precious to myself, in order that I may finish my course and the ministry which I have received from the Lord Jesus to solemnly testify of the gospel of the grace of God.
- 1 Cor 9:24 Do you not know that those who run on a racecourse all run, but one receives the prize? Run in this way, that you may lay hold.
- 1 Cor 9:25 And everyone who contends exercises self-control in all things; they then, that they may receive a corruptible crown, but we, an incorruptible.
- 1 Cor 9:26 I therefore run in this way, not as though without a clear aim; I box in this way, not as though beating the air;
- Heb 12:1 Therefore let us also, having so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, put away every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us and run with endurance the race which is set before us,
- Heb 12:2a Looking away unto Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith, ...

**I. "I have finished the course"—2 Tim. 4:7b:**

- A. Paul began to run the heavenly race after the Lord took possession of him, and he continually ran (1 Cor. 9:24-26; Phil. 3:12-14) that he might finish it (Acts 20:24).
- 1 Cor 9:24 Do you not know that those who run on a racecourse all run, but one receives the prize? Run in this way, that you may lay hold.
- 1 Cor 9:25 And everyone who contends exercises self-control in all things; they then, that they may receive a corruptible crown, but we, an incorruptible.
- 1 Cor 9:26 I therefore run in this way, not as though without a clear aim; I box in this way, not as though beating the air;
- Phil 3:12 Not that I have already obtained or am already perfected, but I pursue, if even I may lay hold of that for which I also have been laid hold of by Christ Jesus.
- Phil 3:13 Brothers, I do not account of myself to have laid hold; but one thing I do: Forgetting the things which are behind and stretching forward to the things which are before,
- Phil 3:14 I pursue toward the goal for the prize to which God in Christ Jesus has called me upward.
- Acts 20:24 But I consider my life of no account as if precious to myself, in order that I may finish my course and the ministry which I have received from the Lord Jesus to solemnly testify of the gospel of the grace of God.
- B. Now at the end he triumphantly proclaimed, "I have finished the course" (2 Tim. 4:7b); for this he will receive from the Lord a reward—the crown of righteousness (v. 8).
- 2 Tim 4:8 Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, with which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will recompense me in that day, and not only me but also all those who have loved His appearing.

## II. A proper Christian life involves running the course, running the race, for the carrying out of God's economy according to His eternal purpose—1 Cor. 9:24; Eph. 1:11; 3:11:

- 1 Cor 9:24 Do you not know that those who run on a racecourse all run, but one receives the prize? Run in this way, that you may lay hold.
- Eph 1:11 In whom also we were designated as an inheritance, having been predestinated according to the purpose of the One who works all things according to the counsel of His will,
- Eph 3:11 According to the eternal purpose which He made in Christ Jesus our Lord,
- A. We need to seek out the journey that the Lord has ordained for us and faithfully walk on it, paying any price to wholeheartedly continue on our journey until we reach the end—2 Tim. 4:7b.
- 2 Tim 4:7b ... I have finished the course; ...
- B. The journey that the Lord has ordained for us is the race that we all run—Heb. 12:1.
- Heb 12:1 Therefore let us also, having so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, put away every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us and run with endurance the race which is set before us,
- C. We need to “run with endurance the race which is set before us”—v. 1:
1. Like the apostle Paul, all Christians must run the race to win the prize, not salvation in the common sense but a reward in a special sense—10:35; 1 Cor. 3:14-15; 9:26-27; Phil. 3:13-14.
- Heb 10:35 Do not cast away therefore your boldness, which has great reward.
- 1 Cor 3:14 If anyone's work which he has built upon the foundation remains, he will receive a reward;
- 1 Cor 3:15 If anyone's work is consumed, he will suffer loss, but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.
- 1 Cor 9:26 I therefore run in this way, not as though without a clear aim; I box in this way, not as though beating the air;
- 1 Cor 9:27 But I buffet my body and make it my slave, lest perhaps having preached to others, I myself may become disapproved.
- Phil 3:13 Brothers, I do not account of myself to have laid hold; but one thing I do: Forgetting the things which are behind and stretching forward to the things which are before,
- Phil 3:14 I pursue toward the goal for the prize to which God in Christ Jesus has called me upward.
  2. We need to run the race with endurance, suffering the opposition with endurance—Heb. 12:2-3.

Heb 12:2 Looking away unto Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down on the right hand of the throne of God.

Heb 12:3 For compare Him who has endured such contradiction by sinners against Himself, so that you may not grow weary, fainting in your souls.

D. We run the Christian race by “looking away unto Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith”—v. 2a:

  1. Jesus is the Author of faith, the Originator, the Inaugurator, the source, and the cause of faith—v. 2:

Heb 12:2 Looking away unto Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down on the right hand of the throne of God.
  - a. The faith of the believers is actually not their own faith but Christ entering into them to be their faith—Rom. 3:22; Gal. 2:16.

Rom 3:22 Even the righteousness of God through the faith of Jesus Christ to all those who believe, for there is no distinction;

Gal 2:16 And knowing that a man is not justified out of works of law, but through faith in Jesus Christ, we also have believed into Christ Jesus that we might be justified out of faith in Christ and not out of the works of law, because

- out of the works of law no flesh will be justified.
- b. Our believing is our appreciation of Christ as a reaction to His attraction—Rom. 10:17.  
Rom 10:17 So faith comes out of hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.
  - c. We need to look away unto Jesus with undivided attention by turning away from every other object—Heb. 12:1-2a; S. S. 1:4; Psa. 27:4.  
Heb 12:1 Therefore let us also, having so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, put away every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us and run with endurance the race which is set before us,  
Heb 12:2a Looking away unto Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith, ...  
S. S. 1:4 Draw me; we will run after you  
Psa 27:4 One thing I have asked from Jehovah; / That do I seek: / To dwell in the house of Jehovah / All the days of my life, / To behold the beauty of Jehovah, / And to inquire in His temple.
  - d. When we look away unto Jesus, He as the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45b) transfuses us with Himself, with His believing element.  
1 Cor 15:45b ... the last Adam became a life-giving Spirit.
2. Faith is a substantiating ability, the ability by which we substantiate, give substance to, the things unseen or hoped for—Heb. 11:1:  
Heb 11:1 Now faith is the substantiation of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.
    - a. We must exercise our spirit of faith, our mingled spirit, to believe and to speak the things that we have experienced of the Lord—2 Cor. 4:13.  
2 Cor 4:13 And having the same spirit of faith according to that which is written, "I believed, therefore I spoke," we also believe, therefore we also speak,
    - b. Faith is in our spirit, which is mingled with the Holy Spirit—1 Cor. 6:17.  
1 Cor 6:17 But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit.
  3. We do not regard, look at, the things that are seen but the things that are not seen; for the things that are seen are temporary, but the things that are not seen are eternal—2 Cor. 4:18:  
2 Cor 4:18 Because we do not regard the things which are seen but the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.
    - a. The Christian life is a life of things not seen—Rom. 8:24-25; Heb. 11:27; 1 Pet. 1:8; Gal. 6:10.  
Rom 8:24 For we were saved in hope. But a hope that is seen is not hope, for who hopes for what he sees?  
Rom 8:25 But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly await it through endurance.  
Heb 11:27 By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king, for he persevered as one seeing the unseen One.  
1 Pet 1:8 Whom having not seen, you love; into whom though not seeing Him at present, yet believing, you exult with joy that is unspeakable and full of glory,  
Gal 6:10 So then, as we have the opportunity, let us do what is good toward all, but especially toward those of the household of the faith.
    - b. The degradation of the church is the degradation from the unseen things to the seen things; the Lord's recovery is to recover His church from the things seen to the things not seen—John 20:25; 2 Cor. 5:7; Rom. 8:24-25; 1 Pet. 1:8.  
John 20:25 The other disciples therefore said to him, We have seen the Lord! But he said to them, Unless I see in His hands the mark of the nails and put my finger into the mark of the nails and put my hand into His side, I will by no means believe.  
2 Cor 5:7 (For we walk by faith, not by appearance)-  
Rom 8:24 For we were saved in hope. But a hope that is seen is not hope, for who

- hopes for what he sees?  
 Rom 8:25 But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly await it through endurance.  
 1 Pet 1:8 Whom having not seen, you love; into whom though not seeing Him at present, yet believing, you exult with joy that is unspeakable and full of glory,
4. Jesus is the Perfecter of faith, the Finisher and Completer of faith—Heb. 12:2:  
 Heb 12:2 Looking away unto Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down on the right hand of the throne of God.
- a. As the Completer of faith, the Lord Jesus continually infuses Himself into us as the believing element and ability.
- b. When we look away unto Him, He ministers heaven, life, and strength to us, transfusing and infusing us with all that He is, so that we may be able to run the heavenly race and live the heavenly life on earth—2 Cor. 3:18.  
 2 Cor 3:18 But we all with unveiled face, beholding and reflecting like a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord Spirit.
- c. As we look away unto Him continually, He will finish and complete the faith that we need to run the heavenly race—Heb. 12:1-2a.  
 Heb 12:1 Therefore let us also, having so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, put away every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us and run with endurance the race which is set before us,  
 Heb 12:2a Looking away unto Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith, ...
- E. We need to be encouraged and warned by the type of the children of Israel, whose journey toward the good land typifies the Christian race toward our good land, the all-inclusive Christ—1 Cor. 10:1-13:
- 1 Cor 10:1 For I do not want you to be ignorant, brothers, that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea;  
 1 Cor 10:2 And all were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea;  
 1 Cor 10:3 And all ate the same spiritual food,  
 1 Cor 10:4 And all drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank of a spiritual rock which followed them, and the rock was Christ.  
 1 Cor 10:5 But with most of them God was not well pleased, for they were strewn along in the wilderness.  
 1 Cor 10:6 Now these things occurred as examples to us, that we should not be ones who lust after evil things, even as they also lusted.  
 1 Cor 10:7 Neither become idolaters, as some of them did; as it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and stood up to play."  
 1 Cor 10:8 Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed fornication, and there fell in one day twenty-three thousand.  
 1 Cor 10:9 Neither let us test Christ, as some of them tested Him and were destroyed by the serpents.  
 1 Cor 10:10 Neither murmur, just as some of them murmured and perished by the destroyer.  
 1 Cor 10:11 Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our admonition, unto whom the ends of the ages have come.  
 1 Cor 10:12 So then let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.  
 1 Cor 10:13 No temptation has taken you except that which is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow that you be tempted beyond what you are able, but will, with the temptation, also make the way out, that you may be able to endure it.
1. We have been redeemed through Christ, delivered out of Satan's bondage, and brought into the revelation of God's economy.
2. We may yet fail to reach the goal of God's calling, that is, to enter into the possession of our good land, Christ, and enjoy His riches for the kingdom of God that we may be His expression in the present age and participate in the fullest enjoyment of Christ in the kingdom age—Phil. 3:12-14; Matt. 25:21, 23.

- Phil 3:12 Not that I have already obtained or am already perfected, but I pursue, if even I may lay hold of that for which I also have been laid hold of by Christ Jesus.
- Phil 3:13 Brothers, I do not account of myself to have laid hold; but one thing I do: Forgetting the things which are behind and stretching forward to the things which are before,
- Phil 3:14 I pursue toward the goal for the prize to which God in Christ Jesus has called me upward.
- Matt 25:21 His master said to him, Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful over a few things; I will set you over many things. Enter into the joy of your master.
- Matt 25:23 His master said to him, Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful over a few things; I will set you over many things. Enter into the joy of your master.

F. The last part of the journey ordained by God for each one of us is the most difficult part of the journey—cf. Mark 6:45-51:

- Mark 6:45 And immediately He compelled His disciples to step into the boat and go before to the other side, toward Bethsaida, while He sent the crowd away.
- Mark 6:46 And after He said farewell to them, He went away to the mountain to pray.
- Mark 6:47 And when evening fell, the boat was in the midst of the sea and He was alone on the land.
- Mark 6:48 And seeing them distressed as they rowed, for the wind was contrary to them, He came toward them about the fourth watch of the night, walking on the sea, and He intended to pass by them.
- Mark 6:49 But when they saw Him walking on the sea, they thought that it was a ghost, and they cried out,
- Mark 6:50 For they all saw Him and were startled. But immediately He spoke with them and said to them, Take courage. It is I. Do not be afraid.
- Mark 6:51 And He went up unto them into the boat, and the wind ceased. And they were greatly astonished in themselves beyond measure,

1. An important thing in the Christian life is to seek out the journey that the Lord has ordained and faithfully walk in it.
2. We may be delighted to be on the right course, but how we run and end it is still a question.

G. We should not grow weary, fainting in our soul for any reason (Heb. 12:3); rather, we should be those who run the race to the end:

Heb 12:3 For compare Him who has endured such contradiction by sinners against Himself, so that you may not grow weary, fainting in your souls.

1. To be weary is to be without strength in the soul; everything seems to be in vain.
2. The one who falls down and rises again is the best runner: “Do not rejoice against me, O my enemy; / When I fall, I will rise up; / When I sit in the darkness, / Jehovah will be a light to me”—Micah 7:8.
3. We should not give up, become weary, or faint in our soul but look away unto Jesus and run the race set before us—Heb. 12:2a.

Heb 12:2a Looking away unto Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith, ...