

Hebrew Chapter 12:1-2

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, 2. looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God.

In the name of the Father, and of the +Son, and of the Holy Spirit

Thank God It's Friday~ (Good Friday)

Grace and Peace to you all!

Many can relate to the phrase 'Thank God it's Friday'. They're usually referring to the fact that it expresses enjoyment that the work week **is** nearly over, and a weekend of leisure (Serving others, Concerts, Game Night, Movies, Time with friends, going to Church) **will** soon be here. We know that in the last few weeks, we've had to create a new normal for what 'Thank God it's Friday' means for us given the circumstance. Many have started a new rhythm of where they have found joy or a new meaning of what 'Thank God it's Friday' means.

So, what's so good about the Friday when Jesus sacrificed His life for us? It's a lot. It is everything!

I've read that around the world, this blessed day is known as, Mourning Friday, Silent Friday, High Friday, Sorrowful Friday, and especially, Good Friday., which some say began as *God's Friday*.

Holy Friday Yes, it certainly was. And is. And always shall be. The word holy is entirely consistent with the suffering and cross that Christ endured for us. Hence, Good Friday is also known as Holy Friday.

As I keep reading verse 1 in this scripture, I thought of a 'Runner' such as those in the Peachtree Road race.

Some just do it to have fun and they come with all kinds of quirky gear. But other who are really serious about the race do not carry extra stuff—you have never seen a 'Real Runner' carrying a suitcase or talking on a cell phone during the race. Everything that is not needed is left behind. And to win, the runner must finish. The runner must not give up before they finish. Determination and Perseverance is required. We're in a race of sorts with this 'virus' and we must be determined to battle through with perseverance in order to win this race. Oh!... and by the way it is not easy and it does not come without pain and grief.

As runners in the race of life, we must "fix our eyes on Jesus." As we run, we must look at Him in faith. He is more than our example; We must run toward Him with all our might, in the expectation that we will be made in His image.

Hebrews 12:2 says that Jesus is the "pioneer" of our faith. He is the one who blazed the trail. He is the one who made the way into the Holy of Holies so that the rest of us could follow into God's presence.

Jesus is also the "perfecter" of our faith—He is the one who brought it to completion. He did not just start it; He finished it. The verse goes on to explain just how He finished

First, it says that Jesus endured the cross. There in Gethsemane, He was determined to carry out the will of the Father. He did this by **focusing on the joy that was to come**. He knew that He would be resurrected and he looked forward with joy to the people He would save. He willingly gave His life to save His sheep (John 10:10–11).

So, what's so good about the Friday when Jesus sacrificed His life for us? It's a lot. It is everything!

Next, it says that Jesus “endured the cross, disregarding its shame”. His crucifixion was a gruesome, painful death, and it included humiliation and shame. The cruel irony is that He could only save others by not saving Himself. He was truly the Messiah, and this prevented Him from coming down off the cross. He was the Chosen One, and He had been chosen for the very purpose of dying as God’s sacrifice for sin. It is also an irony that God would deliver Him, but only after He suffered on the cross.

So, what’s so good about the Friday when Jesus sacrificed His life for us? It’s a lot. It is everything!

Lastly, it says that, after Jesus’ death, God raised Him from the dead, and Jesus ascended into heaven where He now sits at the right hand of God the Creator. This signifies Jesus’ authority (at the right hand) and the fact that His work is finished (He sat down).

The race we are running is probably more like an obstacle course than a nice and neat Road Race. There are real dangers along the way, but we must keep moving forward. We have the examples of past saints to follow, but our supreme example is Jesus Himself, the one who finished the race, paid for our sins, and is now seated in the place of highest honor and authority. We look to Him, not only as our example but as our source of strength.

Today, as we sit, kneel, stand or think of the cross, we rely on God’s power in our weakness, God mercy for the broken-hearted and new life out of death.

- Luke 23:34: Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.
- Luke 23:43: Verily, I say unto you, today thou shall be with me in paradise.
- John 19:26–27: Woman, behold thy son. Son. Behold thy mother.
- Matthew 27:46 and Mark 15:34: My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?
- John 19:28: I thirst.
- John 19:30: It is finished.
- Luke 23:46: Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit.

In Christ’s death we see life. On the cross Christ is in his glory. Into the darkness, God’s light shines

It is finished. It is sufficient.

Let us pray

Today we pray for the Church, its people and all that we bear. Comfort us all as we endure pain, loneliness, fatigue and for some anger. We remember today, the pain and anguish of the cross, and all that Jesus was willing to bear, so we could be set free. Jesus paid the price, a great sacrifice, to offer us the gift of everlasting life.

Help us never to take for granted this gift of love he gave for us all. Help us to be reminded of the cost of it all. Forgive us for being so busy, or sidetracked by other things, for not fully recognizing what Jesus freely has given, what he has done for us.

Thank you Lord that by your hurt we are healed. Thank you that because of your huge sacrifice we can live at no cost. Thank you that sin and death have been dominated, and that your Power is forever.

Thank you that we can say with great expectation, “It is finished...” For we know what’s still to come. We praise you, for you are making all things new.

In the mighty name of Jesus, Amen