

IF I'M GOING TO FINISH I'D BETTER GET STARTED

John 19:30 ...It is finished

Jesus was able to say this at the end of His life because He was finishing right. He had done well.

How could he say that? How could He say that He had run well? He could say it because of what He said in John 4:34My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.

He finished right because He had lived right

We can't finish right without walking right today.

The same is true of Paul

2 Tim. 4:7 I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:

He finished right because he had lived right.

Php 3:13 Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but *this* one thing *I do*, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, 14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

The exciting place of a race is the finish line but that isn't where the real work is done. The real work is done on the course, when no one is watching and there's no one cheering. When the runner keeps going when he doesn't want to, doesn't feel like he can, yet he runs on anyway.

The finish line is merely the result of a race and how it was run.

One day, my life will end, If I am to finish well, I had better get started living right. I can't wait till the end, I must start "running" right now.

If I'm going to finish like Paul did I'm going to have to live like Paul did.

IF I'M GOING TO FINISH, I'D BETTER GET STARTED

1. **I THINK WE NEED TO EXALT THE TRINITY LIKE PAUL DID**

Colossians 1:18 ... that in all things he might have the preeminence.

WE EXALT HIM BY OUR WALK

this deals with our **life**

WE EXALT HIM BY OUR WORK

this deal with our **labor**

WE EXALT HIM BY OUR WORSHIP

this deals with our **love**

If anything we fail in, it is REALLY worshipping God

The best I can tell, when we get to heaven, there'll be more worship than anything. We might ought to practice down here a little.

WE EXALT HIM BY OUR WITNESS

this deal with our **lips**

Ro 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation...

I want a burden to the lost. I want to weep.

I want a boldness. I want to witness without fear.

Ac 9:29 ... he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus

2. **I THINK WE NEED TO ENDURE THE TROUBLE LIKE PAUL DID**

2 Timothy 3:11 Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of *them* all the Lord delivered me.

Paul suffered more than most but it didn't stop him.

HIS THORN DIDN'T STOP HIM

2 Co 12:7 ...there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me

Buffet means to strike in the face or treat with violence.

God told Paul, "my grace is sufficient". He learned to trust God in spite of his infirmities.

We all have a thorn, we all have baggage, some "issue" that will stop us IF WE LET IT.

Paul didn't let his stop him.

HIS TROUBLE DIDN'T STOP HIM

2Co 11:24 Of the Jews five times received I forty *stripes* save one. 25 Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; 26 *In* journeyings often, *in* perils of waters, *in* perils of robbers, *in* perils by *mine own* countrymen, *in* perils by the heathen, *in* perils in the city, *in* perils in the wilderness, *in* perils in the sea, *in* perils among false brethren; 27 In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. 28 Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.

Ac 20:24 But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy

He said, this doesn't effect me one bit. He could say that because, he had already died. He had died to self.

We can't avoid troubles and problems. We need to decide to keep going in spite of them.

We may weep, but don't let tears stop you. If we want to finish right, we can't let tears hinder our race.

2 Ti 2:3 Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

Most of us are sissies. They wondered if they would live till morning and we whine if someone takes our pew.

3. **I THINK WE NEED TO ENJOY THE TRIP LIKE PAUL DID**

Acts 16:25 And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God:

Paul wasn't just enduring, he was actually enjoying the journey. He speaks a great deal about joy, peace, rejoicing.

I want to laugh, even if it's at myself. The average Christian needs to learn how to laugh.

The average Christian is way too serious.

I'm not sure but I believe it had to be a Baptist deacon who wrote the song "gloom despair and agony on me".

Laughter is a medicine that helps everyone. It's a prescription that's free and has no side effects.

I want to smile about nothing, enjoy the sunrise, just enjoy living.

I don't want to forget what is was like to be lost. I want to remember "I'm saved, Glory to God"

I want to appreciate the times He passed by when I didn't deserve it, just because He wanted to.

I want to say Amen and mean it. I want shout because I can't help it.

I want to enjoy the trip, because, all too soon, it will be over.

5. **I THINK WE NEED TO ENCOURAGE THE TIMOTHY'S LIKE PAUL DID**

2 Ti 1:6-7 Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee...

Paul is doing his best to encourage this young preacher.

I can't believe it, it seems like just yesterday, I was young I was looking up to the men of God, like Arthur Blackburn and Hinkle Little and Ralph Sexton Sr.

Now, I'm the old guy. Maybe I can encourage someone coming along behind me.

One thing for certain, I don't want to discourage them.

HE DIDN'T LET TIMOTHY'S IMMATURITY BUG HIM

He never said, "will you grow up boy" to Timothy. He understood. Timothy was immature. He was patient with him. He didn't pamper him but he was patient.

HE DIDN'T LET TIMOTHY'S INEXPERIENCE BOTHER HIM

He knew Timothy was going to make mistakes and he didn't let it get to him.

6. **I THINK WE NEED TO EXPECT THE TRUMPET LIKE PAUL DID**

1 Co 15:52 for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

He's coming, could come at any moment. I need to live my life TODAY as though He is coming today.

I want to live every second as though it might be my last.

The bottom line is, if we want to end our lives right like Jesus and Paul did, we must walk with the Lord every day.

We must start now, we can't wait.

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