**Sermon Notes Sunday 17th March**

**‘The Race Marked Out For Us’**

**Word:** In Hebrews 11, the writer of this letter lists those great Bible characters who lived by faith, whose lives blazed a trail of faithful living. These form the backdrop to the ‘great cloud of witnesses’ in Chapter 12:1. Are there other more contemporary Christians whose example of faithful living has been an inspiration to you?

Read Hebrews 12:1-3. In his sermon, Stephen identified 3 things about how we should run the race marked out for us:

1. **Run in full view**.

* What does it mean to ‘run’ in ‘full view’?
* What difference does it make to imagine this ‘great cloud of witnesses’ (v1) cheering us on as we run our race of faith?

We learn that God also sees (Genesis 16:13), knows (1 Samuel 2:3) and understands (Isaiah 49: 14-16) and encourages us to run well in the race marked out for us.

* How does it feel to know that God sees us in times of failure (disobedience) as well as in times of success (obedience)?

1. **Run stripped down of all that hinders (v1b).**

* What are those things that ‘hinder us’ that we might need to get rid of in order to ‘run’ faster?
* In what way might money, possessions, anxiety, unforgiveness fall into this category? How does sin ‘entangle us’?
* How can we persevere when we ‘hit the wall’ (marathon metaphor).

1. **Run with focus**.

* How might we draw inspiration from considering Jesus (v2,3
* What situations tempt us to give up? How does knowing that we are running Christ’s race, not our own, encourage us. Paul always kept before him a heavenly vision (2 Tim4:6-8) and encouraged his readers to do so too. Who else might inspire you to keep running and being a ‘torch bearer’?

Pray for one another that we will continue **to run the race marked out** for us faithfully, being inspired by those who have gone before us.

Pray for the outcome of our Gift Day last Sunday that we will see a release of resources to enable us to pass on the ‘torch of faith’ to the next generation.

**Conclude your time together by singing the hymn: Facing a task unfinished:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mkwmw8pLRgU>

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