

Everyday Heroes

Heb 12:1-3

Intro: 6 years ago today was the first time Sally and I stepped foot in this church. Of course you know that Tuesday marks the 6th anniversary of that horrible day when 19 blood thirsty men chose to hijack 4 air plans, flying 2 of them in to the WTC, one into the Pentagon and one, as a result of some **Everyday Heroes**, into a field in PA.

On that day and the days following many heroes emerged. Real life heroes, men and women who did things we can't believe. What is it that makes a hero a hero? What makes a fire fighter run into a burning building while others are running out? What is that makes soldier willing to die for the men and women in his country, many of whom don't appreciate what he is doing?

In Today's text we are going to find the traits it takes to be a real, **Everyday Hero**.

[Read Heb 12:1-3/pray/dismiss Jr. church]

Today we tend to remember the tragedy, death and destruction that were caused on September 11, 2001. But there are many who look at that day and remember heroes.

The heroes who went into that towering inferno and began to climb the stairs to the floors above the 90th floor in an attempt to rescue the trapped, only to discover that the building was about to fall down around them. Who, as it turned out, gave their lives in their attempt to save others. Or those heroes who came to the aid of the injured outside of the WTC giving first aid and assistance where they could, many of them too were buried when the buildings collapsed. Or the heroes at the Pentagon who risked

their lives to get their fellow soldiers, sailors, airman and marines out of the burning section of the building where the third plan had been flown. Who can forget those everyday heroes, after receiving phone calls telling them what was happening in NYC and Alexandria, VA realized that the hijackers of their plane had the same intentions with theirs. So with this realization, and the fact they were being flown to their certain death, decided they were not going to set idly by and let it happen, took on the hijackers and ultimately forced the plan down in a field in western PA.

Of course we can not fail to mention all the men and women who have been called upon to take the battle to the enemy in Afghanistan, Iraq and other unknown locations around the globe. These men and women willing serve this nation ready to give their lives if necessary; many now serving on their second and in some cases their third trip to a combat zone. Or the heroes who have been severely injured – losing legs, arms, eyes – but still being willing and even requesting permission to go back.

What is it that makes a person do these kinds of things? What makes a hero become a hero? I know for sure that heroes don't set out to be heroes.

How do I know they didn't set out to be a hero? To illustrate how I know consider this, since congress created the Medal of Honor in 1861 there have been only 3,460 who have received it. MOH winners are considered heroes because many received their medal in the hospital recovering from injuries received while doing the thing they were rewarded for and nearly 18% of all MOH awarded are awarded posthumously. Heroes don't set out to be heroes they become heroes because of who they are – it is a character trait or traits they all have that makes them into heroes.

What traits do heroes have? In our text today we find the traits heroes have.

In our text the writer uses a sports metaphor, running, but that doesn't change much. In fact our text comes right after the writer has just walked us through what is commonly called the "Hall of Faith", Heb 11 is a line up of some of the heroes of the faith. So he follows a walk through the wall of faith heroes with or text.

In many ways the traits of a successful athlete and the character traits of a hero are similar.

What are these **Character Traits of a Hero**?

1. **They Understand They Are Part Of Something Bigger Than Themselves** V.1
 - a. They Realize They Are Not Alone V.1a
 - b. They Realize There Are Obstacles To Overcome V. 1b
 - c. They Realized There Would Be Failures
 - d. They Realize There Is A Purpose For What They Are Doing V. 1c
2. **They Are Not Easily Distracted** V.2a
 - a. They Are Focused
 - i. In running, as in most sports, where you look is extremely important
 1. Nothing will throw off your stride or slow you down like looking at your feet, over your shoulder or the crowds in the stands\
 2. The Christian race is very much like this
 - ii. Some Christians are preoccupied with themselves
 1. They pay too much attention to what they are doing there focus isn't on the prize
 2. There is a place for concern for what we are doing

3. But if we focus on ourselves our service will suffer just like a runner
- iii. It is not that we try hard *not* to look at this or that or the other things that may distract us
 1. If our focus is truly on Jesus Christ, we will see everything else in its right perspective
 2. When our eyes are on the Lord, the Holy Spirit has the perfect opportunity to use us, to get us running and winning.
- iv. Focusing on Jesus as our example
 1. He is the **"author and finisher of our faith;"**
 - a. *Author* means 'pioneer or originator, the one who begins and takes the lead'
 - i. Jesus is the author, the originator, of all faith
 - ii. The focus of our faith is also the originator of faith
 - iii. Here, in this text the meaning is of chief leader, or chief example
 - b. Jesus Christ is our most excellent example of faith.
 - c. He was "tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15)
 2. Not only is Jesus the *author or chief example of our faith* the text says He was also the *finisher*
 - a. *Finisher* means 'One who carries it through to completion'
 - b. Jesus had faith in his father until, as he said it in John 19:30 **"It is finished"**
 - c. His work was finished not only in that it was completed but in that it was perfected which is another meaning of the word translated *finisher*

- d. **III:** If a composer dies while working on a masterpiece, his work on that piece is over but it is not finished. On the cross, Jesus' work was both over and finished—perfected.
 - e. It accomplished exactly what it was meant to accomplish, because, from birth to death, His life was totally committed into His Father's hands.
 - f. There has never been a walk of faith like Jesus'.
3. His example is one that can be looked up to
- a. By faith, Jesus **endured the cross, despising the shame.**
 - b. Why should we not also trust God in everything, since we have not begun to suffer what Jesus suffered?
 - c. Hebrew 12:4 says, "**Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin**"
 - d. Jesus has set such a high example of faith that it is on His example that we should rivet our eyes for as long as we live.
 - e. It is good to glance at the examples of the cloud of Old Testament witnesses, but it is imperative that we *fix* our eyes on Jesus
3. **They Keep Their Eyes Fixed On The Prize** V.2b
- a. In the ancient Isthmian games of Greece, a pedestal stood at the finish line, and on it hung a wreath—the winner's prize.
 - i. No one runs a race without some expectation of reward.

1. The reward may be nothing more than a ribbon or a trophy or a wreath of leaves.
 2. It may be a prize worth a large amount of money.
 3. Sometimes the reward is fame and recognition.
 4. Sometimes it is a healthy body.
 5. Occasionally the race is run for the sheer exhilaration.
- ii. The Isthmian races and the race spoken of in Hebrews 12, however, were not run for exhilaration.
1. The Greek word translated *race* is 'agon' we get our English word agony from it.
 2. This type of race is the agony race, the marathon, the race that seems never to end.
 3. It is not a race you run simply for the pleasure of running.
 4. If you do not have something important to look forward to at the end of this race, you will likely not start it and will certainly not finish it.
- iii. Jesus did not run His race of faith for the pleasure of race itself, though He must have experienced great satisfaction in seeing people healed, comforted, brought to faith, and started on the way to spiritual growth.
1. But He did not leave His Father's presence and His heavenly glory
 - a. endure temptation and fierce opposition by Satan himself
 - b. suffer ridicule, scorn, blasphemy, torture
 - c. and crucifixion by his enemies

- d. and experience the misunderstanding and denial of His own disciples for the sake of whatever few pleasures and satisfactions He had while on earth
- 2. He was motivated by immeasurably more than this
- 3. No this verse says that only what was at the end of the race could have motivated Jesus to leave what He did and endure what He did.
 - a. Jesus ran for a very good reason, **the joy set before Him** and sitting **down at the right hand of the throne of God**
 - i. He ran for the joy of exaltation
 - ii. In John 17:4-5 Jesus prayed, ***“I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. ⁵And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.”***
 - iii. Jesus gained His reward by glorifying His Father while on earth, and He glorified God by totally exhibiting the Father’s attributes and by fully doing the Father’s will.
 - b. **The prize Christians are to run for is NOT HEAVEN**
 - i. If we are truly Christians, if we belong to God by faith in Jesus Christ, heaven is already ours

- ii. We run for the same prize that Jesus ran for, and we achieve it in the same way He did
- iii. We run for the joy of exaltation God promises will be ours if we glorify Him on earth as His Son did
- iv. We glorify God by allowing His attributes to shine through us and by obeying His will in everything we do.
- 4. When we anticipate the heavenly reward of faithful service, joy will be ours now
 - a. Paul spoke of his converts as his ***“joy and crown”*** (Phil. 4:1)
 - b. And his ***“hope or joy or crown of exultation”*** (1 Thess. 2:19)
 - c. He had present joy because of future promise
- 5. Those he had won to the Lord were evidence that he had glorified God in his ministry
- iv. What gives us joy in this life is confidence of reward in the next.
 - 1. Even if we must suffer for the Lord, we should be able to say with Paul, ***“Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all”*** (Phil. 2:17)
 - 2. And though, like Paul, we are not yet perfect, we should also forget what is behind and reach forward to what lies ahead, pressing on ***“...toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus”***

3. We should be able to look forward to the day when our Lord says to us, "**Well done,... enter thou into the joy of thy lord**" (Matt. 25:21)
 - b. When Jesus went to the cross, He endured all that it demanded
 - i. He despised the shame and accepted it willingly, for the sake of His Father's reward and the joy that anticipation of this reward brought
 - ii. As we run the race of the Christian life, we can run in the joyful anticipation of that same reward—the crown of righteousness, which one day we can cast at His feet as evidence of our eternal love for Him
4. **They Remain Committed Until The Finish** V. 3
- a. When we get weary in the race, when our faith runs out and we think God has turned His back, when it seems we will never get out of the mess we are in and we are sure our faith cannot hold on any longer, we should read this verse
 - i. Part of the purpose for **fixing our eyes on Jesus** is the same as that for considering the **cloud of witnesses**—our encouragement.
 - ii. Those saints were heroes of faith; He is the epitome of faith.
 - iii. Nothing we will ever be called to endure will compare to that which He endured
 - iv. He is the divine Son of God, but while on earth He did not live in His own power and will, but in His Father's
 - v. Otherwise, He could not be our example
 - vi. And unless, by the Holy Spirit, we are truly *able* to live in the same way in which He lived, His life

- would not be an example but an impossible ideal to mock and to judge us.
- b. We rejoice that one day we will "*live together with Him*" (1 Thess. 5:10),
- c. We should also rejoice that we can live **like** Him right now
 - i. We don't live in our own power but in His, just as on earth He did not live in His own power but in the Father's
 - ii. We can say with Paul, "**I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me**" (Gal. 2:20)
- d. Remember, like I said earlier, the race spoken of in verse one is not a race just for fun, it is a race of agony.
 - i. Christ suffered agony but He didn't give up
 - ii. The heroes of Sept 11th suffered agony but they didn't give up
 - iii. In the race that is set before us we will suffer agony but never give up

Conclusion: This life we live has been set before us by the Lord; we must live it like a runner runs his race. When we do then we will line up among all the **Everyday Heroes of the Faith** from years gone by. Hebrews chapter 11 is a list of **Heroes of the Faith** but I can take you to a hall way in BBFI headquarters building and show you pictures of great men of the past, missionaries who, like many of those in chapter 11 and for certain any hero you will ever know, had the **character traits of a hero** that we have looked at today. There are more than 60 pictures on that wall in the BBFI headquarters, men and women who **They Understand They Are Part Of Something Bigger Than**

***Themselves, They Are Not Easily Distracted, They Keep Their
Eyes Fixed On The Prize & They Remained Committed Until
The Finish***