



SPRING-TIME DAILY ENCOURAGEMENTS

Carstairs-Bancroft United Church

March 28, 2023



Photo: Our Daily Bread

RUNNING FOR WHAT MATTERS

Let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.

Hebrews 12:1

READ Hebrews 11:39 - 12:3

It was impossible not to tear up at my friend Ira's status update. Posted in 2022 only days after she'd left her home in Kyiv, the besieged capital of Ukraine, she shared a past image of herself lifting her country's flag after completing a running event. She wrote, "We are all running to the best of our abilities a marathon called life. Let's run it these days even better than that. With something that never dies in our hearts." In the following days, I saw the many ways my friend continued to run that race, as she kept us updated on how to pray for and support those suffering in her country.

Ira's words brought new depth to the call in Hebrews 12 for believers to "run with perseverance" (v. 1). That call follows chapter 11's moving account of the heroes of faith, the "great cloud of witnesses" (12:1) who'd lived with courageous, persistent faith—even at risk to their lives (11:33–38). Even though they "only saw . . . and welcomed [God's promises] from a distance" (v. 13), they were living for something eternal, for something that never dies.

All believers in Jesus are called to live that same way because the shalom—the flourishing and peace—of God's kingdom is worth giving our all for. Christ's example and power is what sustains us (12:2–3).

By **Monica La Rose**

PRAY & REFLECT

Dear God, words fail me when I see Your people's faith and courage in heartbreaking circumstances. Give me the courage to follow You like that. Amen.

What examples have you seen of courageous faith? How does Jesus' example give you hope?

SCRIPTURE INSIGHT

What's the role of "the great cloud of witnesses" in Hebrews 12:1? We might think they're to serve as our examples of being faithful to run the race God has called us to. However, after telling their stories and connecting their presence to the race of the Jewish believers in Jesus (and by extension to us; see ch. 11), we're told to "run . . . [while] fixing our eyes on Jesus" (12:1 - 2) and to "consider him" when we're tired and taxed by the race before us (v. 3). Our encouragement doesn't come from those who've gone before us and modeled faith; we don't look to those awaiting perfection to find courage and strength. We find our strength in Christ alone. A witness is someone who's seen or heard or experienced something. The witnesses have already seen God's faithfulness and testify to the need to focus on Jesus. They point us to Him. – By **J.R. Hudberg**

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