Good Morning!

For some reason when Westerners come to Hebrews 12, we tend to read it as if there are all of these OT heroes floating on clouds watching our lives. Heaven may know a lot more about what is going on down here than what I imagine, but the occupants of heaven probably have more interesting things to do than to watch us.

The idea is that since we have so many people whose lives stand as a witness of their faith they appear like a cloud surrounding us. Their witness calls us do something. This is nothing new to the Hebrew Christians; they know exactly what this calls them to do. This is a “half-time speech.” This is the coach firing up a squad of experienced football players to go finish the game with all the fire they began with.

First, get rid of all the encumbrances -stuff that doesn’t matter but they get in the way. It prevents you from running your best. This is a judgment call. Something that is an encumbrance for me may not be one for you. It may not be an encumbrance early in our lives but becomes one later. Softball – when you are single and you are using the team to witness to your teammates, being on three summer leagues is probably not an encumbrance. When you are married with three kids, you had better believe that it drifts over from encumbrance into sin!

Lay aside sin. We approach this as if we do this once and it should be forever finished. We need to think of sin as 50 extra pounds of fat – or 150 extra pounds! It does not disappear at salvation. It is there, on us; comfortably hanging around our middles. It has found a nice home there, and it has no intention of leaving. In the running of this race we are laying aside the sin. If it helps to understand, if we stop running we stop losing the weight. If we stop running the race as believers, we stop the laying off of sin. You may not gain lots more, but that sin will always there be affecting your life.

So what is the coach’s motivation in this half-time speech? We finish the race by looking to the goal line. There are numerous videos of an athlete, who thought he or she had won and started looking to the crowd to get them to cheer, only to be passed in the last seconds of the race. We do not look to the sidelines, we do not look for cheers, and we do not mind the jeers. We look to Jesus who has run this race before us. We are running because of Him. We look to the ending that we know by faith is our finish line. So we do not grow weary or lose heart. We have already won.

Have a blessed day in the Lord!

In Christ Pastor EA