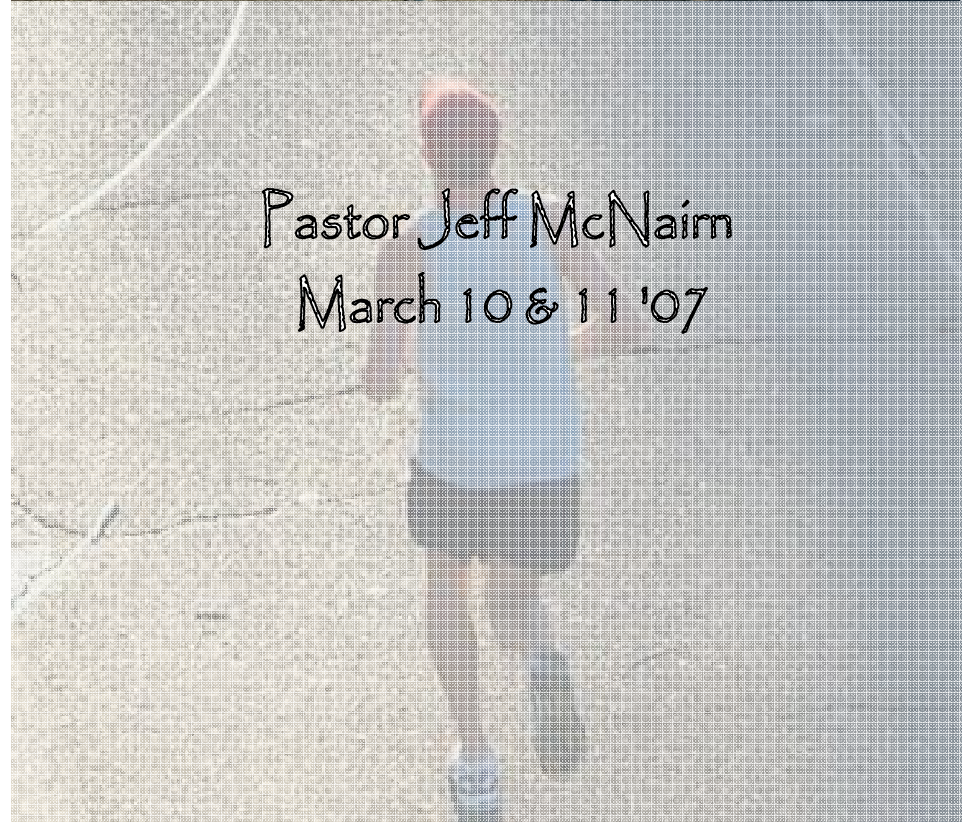


Going Past Mile 20



Greater Than...


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March 10 & 11 '07



The Main Idea

The Christian life requires perseverance because doing the will of God involves times of hardship.

1. A New Thing (Hebrews 10:19-25)

- A.) Let's enter with confidence (Hebrews 10:19)
- B.) Let's draw near (Hebrews 10:22)
- C.) Let's keep the course (Hebrews 10:23)
- D.) Let's provoke one another (Hebrews 10:24-25)

2. A Final Warning (Hebrews 10:26-31)

- A.) Do Not Reject The Truth
 - And Spurn The Son
 - And Profane The Blood
 - And Insult The Spirit

3. A Call to Persevere (Hebrews 10:32-39)

- A.) A Look Back (Hebrews 10:32-34)
- B.) A Look Forward (Hebrews 10:35-39)

Open It

Marathon runners tell us that one of the greatest obstacles to finishing a race is mile 20. Many runners refer to mile 20 as half way through the race because of the difficulty in completing the last 6.2 miles.

- Describe a time in your Christian life when you faced the 20th mile. How did you get through it? What did you learn from it – about yourself and about God?

Dig Deeper Into It

- Read the following verses:
Hebrews 10.19-39 and 5.7-9 – What jumps out at you about these readings?

It's important to keep in mind that Hebrews and particularly chapter ten is written to a group of people who were facing grave challenges and temptations in their Christian life. Their challenges were likely from those who opposed the teachings of Jesus (cf. John 9.22) and their temptation was to turn back to Judaism.

Read Mark 8.31-38, Mark 9.30-37, Mark 10.32-45 – Do you notice any recurring pattern in these three readings in Mark? (take some time and examine the three above passages in Mark and discuss as a group before reading any further) (have you read it and discussed? Don't look ahead prematurely now J) It seems to be that between 8.31 and 10.45 Jesus is teaching his followers what Christian discipleship looks like. Each section has the following pattern: (1) Jesus teaches his young apprentices that the Messiah is a suffering servant, (2) the disciples respond in such a way that they are showing that they don't get it (i.e. Peter says, "no way" (8.32), disciples ask 'who will be the greatest (9.33-34), and disciples ask for the best seats (10.35-40), (3) Jesus teaches about what true Christian discipleship looks like. Look back and see if you can see the pattern. (as an aside take a look at the two stories that couch the above sections of Scripture – Mark 8.22-26 and Mark 10.46-52 – What are the similarities and differences? Do you think there is any significance in the differences?)

- What do these above verses say to us about Christian discipleship and suffering?
- What does it say to us (the North American Church as a whole) today about our Christian walk when we suffer so little as Christians?
- What does it say to us when the places where the Church is growing the fastest and seeing the most fruit are in those areas where persecution is the greatest?

(Don't get me wrong I'm not suggesting we go out looking for persecution or engage in some form of asceticism in order to suffer for Jesus. I am just wondering if we as a Church (big C church) have become a bit too comfortable in our culture. I am wondering if we have washed down the gospel so much that it has lost its offense (Lk.12.50-53) and subsequently its power. And finally I wonder if we have made our salvation too much of a "personal" thing and thus blurred our mandate to 'go into all the world.' This is a challenge to me as much as it is to you – is the fact that I suffer so little for being a Christian a telling sign that I am not in the world the way I should be? I have to wonder what it would be like if someone like Paul or Peter were living in Kelowna or North America today?

Apply It

- I do realize that some of you who are reading this do indeed face persecution for your faith - maybe from your family, colleagues, fellow students, or loved ones – if this does describe you I want you to know that I am praying for you that your faith will remain strong. If someone in your group is facing trials because of their faith please gather around them and pray for them.
- I would also like to encourage you to pray for each other that your faith would be stronger and your testimony bolder.
- If at this point in your life you feel as though you are facing the 20th mile could you share that with your group and allow them to pray for you?
- Hebrews 10.19-22 tells us that we can draw near to God with confidence in full assurance of faith. Is there anything in your life today that you need to come to God with boldness and in full assurance?
- In closing read Hebrews 10.35-39 as a benediction and blessing.