

Mark 10:46-52, Hebrews 12:1-3 – ‘Running the race’

Intro – season of year when remember the bigger picture (All Saints last week, Remembrance next week) – inspiration from today’s baptism – key image of Christian journey (S) ‘Running the race’

But **start with Jesus and story from Mark** – travelling to Jerusalem – crowds, special – met beggar ‘Have mercy’ – What do you want? (duh! BUT...) – ‘Following Jesus along the road’

LIKE US in worship – hunger for Jesus / I want to see you Jesus / follow him (turn bend in road and out of sight)

Onto Hebrews : same idea in different way (S) ‘Fix your eyes on Jesus’ – what mean?

READ v1 – RACE – 3 things

See the crowd (S) – not always a good thing – Headstart harvest story

BUT more like Olympics – show photo of stadium – story of Mexican runner (S). Crowd cheering us on – imagine that today. Crowd not people in front of us, but millions of saints in heaven looking down cheering Owen/Freya/Ellie on. Let’s see the crowd and keep running.

Shed your ‘stuff’ (S) – Olympic swimming coats – how swim in that? – but don’t keep them on to swim (S). Need to avoid stuff that distracts us ‘Fight valiantly against sin’ – not physical fighting, but a determination that not going to let stuff stop us following Jesus and running our race (like swimmer, lots of people try and follow Jesus with coats on)

Run the race (S) – ‘with perseverance’ i.e. ‘marathon not a sprint’ –
Premier League last year – Man City won first 5 games / LC good but...
/ Tott poor start // LC top at Christmas // end of season Man City
nowhere, LC and Tott battle, and LC crossed line.

Not how you start but whether you finish – like Mexican lady at
Olympics **(S)** – key thing SHE FINISHED

What’s saddest thing about my job? Not what people expect – not
dealing with dying/bereaved, it’s seeing people who stop running the
race. Start well, and then disappear (running along and stop
somewhere on side) – not crisis (often starts race again), but other
stuff. Get distracted, take eyes off prize.

CONCLUSION: Prayer for **Owen/Freya/Ellie** (and all of us) is that they
will keep running their race, keep fixing their eyes on Jesus, keep
following Jesus along the road. Great to start – but **it’s not how you
start, it’s whether you finish**, whether you keep going, whether you
keep running that race for God.

PRAY