**Sermon Title: The Endurance of Courage**

**Sermon Text: Hebrews 12:1-4**

**Sermon Purpose: To call the hearer to a life of enduring courageous Christian faithfulness.**

**Sermon Proposition: There are 6 practices needed to live with enduring courageous faith.**

**Introduction:**

The audience:

1. Congregation of Jews. They would be Jewish Christians, this is really the thesis of the book, the writer often refers to them as holy brethren.

2. Group of intellectually convinced Jews, but have not believed or received Christ. They are sitting on the fence.

3. There are the antagonistic Jews, who are not believers, and not saved.

They are all in danger of hanging onto Judaism and legalism.

**I. Observe those that have entered. V.1a**

**II. Lay aside all that ensnares. V.1b**

**III. Run the race with endurance. V.1c**

**IV. Look unto Christ as an example. V.2**

**V. Think about what Christ endured. V.3**

**VI. Strive against as Christ emphasized. V.4**

**I. Observe those that have entered. V.1a**

 A. The **present** participants. V.1a

 Section begins in Hebrews 10:19.

 B. The **past** participants.

 These people are those described in Chapter 11. Their examples encourage the readers and urges them to enter or keep running even if they stumble.

**II. Lay aside all that ensnares. V.1b**

 A. Lay aside every **weight** or impediment.

 The fear of suffering, rejection, discouragement that infects us through doubt, sensuality, immediate gratification. The Levitical system and legalism for Jews.

 B. Lay aside the sin of doubt or **unbelief**.

 These things and attitudes always hampers the forward movement of faithfulness.

**III. Run the race with endurance. V.1c**

 There are a number of metaphors writers of Scripture use to picture and describe the Christian life.

 1. Wrestling match (**Ephesians 6:10-12**)

 2. Boxing match

 **1 Corinthians 9:24-27** Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain *it*. **25** And everyone who competes *for the prize* is temperate in all things. Now they *do it* to obtain a perishable crown, but we *for* an imperishable *crown*. **26** Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as *one who* beats the air. **27** But I discipline my body and bring *it* into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

 3. Slavery

 4. Farming (**2 Timothy 2:5**)

 5. Soldiering (**2 Timothy 2:5**)

 6. Athletes

 7. Marriage (**Romans 7:1-6**)

 8. Fathers and Sons

 9. Suffering for Christ sake

 The race is the Christian life, and it must be run with discipline. Like a runner the Christian must be in constant motion toward the goal despite opposition. This demands and calls for strenuous effort and endurance, which is learned from constant training and discipline, mentally, physically, and attitudinally.

 Endurance is the steady determination to keep going regardless of the temptation to slow down or quit.

**IV. Look unto Christ as an example. V.2**

 A. Jesus is the focus of our faith and faithfulness. V.2a (**Hebrews 11:26-27; 1:1-4**)

 **Acts 7:55-59** But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, **56** and said, "Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!" **57** Then they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and ran at him with one accord; **58** and they cast *him* out of the city and stoned *him*. And the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul. **59** And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on *God* and saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

 **2 Corinthians 4:5-7** For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake. **6** For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. **7** But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.

 B. Jesus is the Author, Initiator, Originator of the Christian faith and the Christian’s faithfulness. V.2b

 C. Jesus is the finisher, completer, perfector of our faith and faithfulness. V.2c

 The cloud of witnesses inspire us, but our main focus is found in the person and work of Christ, who has gone before us. The faith of all who approach God the Father, through Christ, and He brings us to the intended goal of thankful worship, makes us acceptable to God and presents us in His presence.

 (**Hebrews 12:28; 10:14; 11:40**)

 Jesus endured the cross in anticipation of the joy of being Savior of His people when he necessary suffering was over. As Moses looked to his reward with joy (11:26), so Jesus was aware of the joy of fulfilling the Father’s will.

 He endured execution on a stake or cross as a criminal.

 Crucifixion was such a shameful form of execution that it was forbidden to be inflicted on Roman citizens. In addition, the Jews believed that everyone hanged on a tree is cursed by God.

 **Deuteronomy 21:23** "his body shall not remain overnight on the tree, but you shall surely bury him that day, so that you do not defile the land which the LORD your God is giving you *as* an inheritance; for he who is hanged *is* accursed of God.

 **Galatians 3:13** Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed *is* everyone who hangs on a tree"),

 But, have finished the race He started and now sits at the right hand of God the Father on the throne of God.

**V. Think about what Christ endured. V.3**

 Jesus is the Supreme example of voluntary willingness to suffer in obedience to God. He faced hostility from sinners and false Judaism, by being blasphemed, falsely accused, rejected, lied on, betrayed, falsely charged, false judicial system, abandonment, etc.

 Why are we charged to practice these principles? So we don’t become weary, tired, or discouraged or despondent in our souls.

**VI. Strive against as Christ’s emphasized. V.4**