

The Christian Race

By Keith Daniel

There are two portions of scripture which have come to my heart. The one you all know very well. *Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience.*¹ I like that word. Not just run, but *run with patience the race that is set before us.*

Also in First Peter, a book I love to preach on. *The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock.* He's speaking to the elders here. The Amplified says "Tend (nurture, guard, guide, and fold) the flock" God has given you. That is the younger generation in your responsibility. So elders, *Feed the flock which are among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves to the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time*². Somewhere down the road, when you're ready for it. *Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder.*

Let us run with patience the race that is set before us. Looking to Jesus, the author and finisher—the One Who started it, the One Who will finish it—of our faith. Looking to Jesus when you're running with patience this race that is set before you by God, to run. He says, "You run for Me. Looking to Jesus as you run, in case you grow weary, in case you grow confused about how to run. Looking to Jesus all the way along. Running for Jesus."

I was telling you about my sons, the three sons that God gave me. We wanted daughters too. It wasn't God's will. We wouldn't change these three for a million daughters now that we've got them, for we love them. There's Noel, Roy, then along came the surprise. What we call a Laa Lammetjie—in Afrikaans in South Africa that means a late little lamb of the flock. He just came along, this little last addition to the family, and what a joy he's been. He's in the meeting, by the by, somewhere, with his mommy. Well, Samuel is the joy of our home. I hope you don't mind me saying that in front of him. I do say it to him, you know. He doesn't seem to really know what I'm saying, but he is, to his brothers, and his mommy, and to me.

Samuel went to a preschool. Back in Cape Town there's a particular preschool that if you can get into it you're very fortunate. It has something of a tremendous foundation for little boys and girls. It's before schooling, but they take things seriously in this preschool. You'd think it was a university sometimes. Everything is so incredibly earnest in that preschool, before they were even reaching school, that Samuel just loved to go to. He was off with his satchel and school cases. Wanted to be like his brothers, you know. Anyway, at this particular preschool, they even had a sports day. So earnest that you'd think it was one of the real high school inter-schools. There were all the children sitting there with all the ribbons and the flags down the field, all these little girls, little boys, sitting down in their classes with their teacher. They're all cordoned off. All the mommies and daddies crowded around the field. Some of these little fellows and girls were so small they didn't quite know if they were running the right direction. One was running the wrong way! But they still cheered him.

Anyway, then came the mommies' race. That was quite something for Jenny to run in, but she had to. Then the closing race, the final big event, the climax of the whole day, after all the screaming, the applauding, the excitement, was the daddies' race. And that was something. Because this was my little Laa Lammetjie, my little baby. I had big boys. Now all the other men, this was their first child. They were younger fellows, you know, all these men. They just had these young babies. I had big boys. This was our last one. I was much older than them, and I felt it. I tried to get out of it. I was reluctant. I said "Jenny, I can't, please. I'm not up to it today." I looked at these young fellows and said "How am I going to run against these fellows?"

Jenny says, "You can't not run. Look at Samuel."

¹ Hebrews 12:1

² 1 Peter 5:1-6

There's Samuel, "Come on, Daddy, run for me. Come Daddy. You're gonna win. Win, Daddy." So I went and stood there. I saw all these fellows who looked like they spent their day in the gym. There they were, getting ready, getting their breath, you know. I thought "Oh my word, what am I going to do?" Then I looked over there at Samuel, and all the children screaming for their daddies, and Samuel caught my eye. He said, "Win, Daddy!" So I looked at him, and I thought in my heart, "Oh God, wouldn't it be wonderful if I did win? For Samuel. Just for Samuel. Look at him. Oh my, there he's expecting me to win. And he's watching me now."

Well, they told us some ridiculous things about this race. You couldn't believe it. It wasn't just running. It was pushups and all sorts of things that you had to do. You know, when we were younger, it was just a race. These days you've got to be able to swim and ride bicycles and everything to run in a race. Well, they had some sort of idea incorporating a lot of things to win. So I listened carefully, and I looked over again at Samuel. Bang went the gun. I just ran! I poured myself as I ran against the wind, did all these silly things, then ran back and did all the pushups. I stood up and looked around, and there was no one there. I thought "What have I done wrong?" I looked across the field, and there they were all still running. Another fellow caught up, and I looked at him, as he was trying to get two pushups, and he couldn't quite get passed two. I thought "Oh my word." I looked at the principle, and I looked at the teacher, Samuel's teacher, who was standing right by, and I said "What have I left out? What have I done wrong? What am I doing wrong?"

The teacher said, "You've won. Don't worry. You've won."

There was no applause. There was just this stunned silence all around. The first thing I did was look for Samuel. There he was. Oh, he knew his daddy had won. I ran over to him. You know, I didn't look at the crowd, I didn't want the crowd, I didn't think of it. I just thought of Samuel. I looked at the joy in that little boy's face. He was just overwhelmed.

"Daddy, you won!"

I said, "Daddy ran for you. I ran just for you." You know, it was then the crowd started applauding. There was something different about the way they applauded, because they saw who I'd run for, and why I'd run like that. There was a sudden consciousness of the joy it had brought Samuel, which was all I wanted. To see his face, to see his joy at the way I ran. There was something so different about the way they applauded. It's so different when you run out of love for someone else than when you're running just for yourself, you know. You run so differently. Everyone's aware of it, especially the one you ran for. The joy it gave him, when he knows it was just for him.

I hope you're running this race for Jesus. I hope it's giving Him joy. You're not running for yourself, just because you're amongst the runners. I hope it's not a heavy thing for you to run in this race that's set before you. If you run with one purpose, one intent. I didn't look at the crowd. I didn't see any other face, when I knew I'd won. I just looked for one face, the one I'd run for, to see what it meant to him. To see his smile. That's all you're running for. Looking unto Jesus, the one who set you out on this race. Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of the faith.

When I was at school, I loved to run. I loved sport. Every sport. Especially athletics. There were always two of us, from boyhood right through schooling, who were the fastest runners in the school. I used to know this the boy was the one I was running against. Sometimes I beat him, sometimes he beat me, but there was always the two of us. We ran, knowing there were just the two of us to run against here. We respected each other. We didn't come much nearer each other than that, right through schooling. But suddenly, at high school, this fellow and I had to run together, in a relay race. Now a relay race is where you run as a team. Our high school choose all the fastest runners. There were about 4 or 5 of us who were to run, representing the school in the interschool sport, athletics day, where they come from all over the country, the best runners. Thousands and thousands from all over filled the stadium just to cheer on their school, in the event they were chosen, having run against all the different schools, now to run in the best. Here we were, selected. This fellow was the one, second to last, to run with the baton. We had to place the baton in each other's hands. I was to be the last runner, the one who would take the baton to the finishing line.

We learned a lot of things about this relay race. You don't wait until the baton is in your hand, you start running before it's in your hand. You build up speed, and he has to put that baton in your hand, carefully, to pass the baton on. They wanted us to run now, the last lap. You don't look back when he's got to pass it on, you just run. He's got to put it in your hand while you're running. Well, we so trained.

Now I don't know what happened that day, but they realized a record, a South African record, is going to be smashed beyond all belief, by this little school of mine. I was the last one, and I realized

something wonderful is happening here. There was just cheering, screaming, from everybody by this time, not only our school. This fellow comes along, and I was running, waiting for the baton. I don't know what happened to him. I never, ever asked him. Something made him not put the baton carefully in my hand. Something made him throw the baton. He threw it, and the baton went right past me, fell on the ground, bounced up, right off the field. You know, it so shook me I fell. Somehow I got up off the ground in agony. There was just an amazed cry of despair across the whole stadium "What happened? The baton dropped. The winning team dropped the baton." By the time I got the baton the other fellow had passed, from another school. And he ran. Oh, he ran. I picked up the baton, I began to run, and I was gaining ground, and gaining ground, but he went over the finish line. You know, nobody cheered. Not one of the thousands cheered, because the team that should have won lost. Because on the last lap, the baton fell. There was grief in my school. There was a silence in my school. No one ever spoke to me about that. No one ever came and talked to me, not even my sport master, he wouldn't look at me. For a long, long time, he just couldn't speak. It was a grief. We lost when we should have won.

One generation brings a standard to the next generation in the church. They carefully pass the doctrine, this uncompromised standard, to the next generation. The next generation takes it, as they go, and they hold it out to the next generation, the younger. Let me tell you something, in case you're not aware of it. You're running the last lap. Don't doubt it. This is the last lap. And the baton, the doctrine, the holiness standard, is being held out to you. You be careful now! We must be careful now, as elders, in our weariness, perhaps, and in the state of the world, not to just throw the baton so it falls. We have to put it carefully into the hands of the younger generation who have to run the last race, the last lap. We have to place it so carefully: all the doctrine, the standard, so carefully, so you don't lose the grip of it. You're running, but we have to put it in your hands. We have to be careful not to do what so many missions, so many churches, so many movements across the world, that held the standard right through, and suddenly, this generation, just this generation, they throw it away. They dropped it to take up a more "acceptable" standard, a more "acceptable" message. We must not. Don't lose, when you're running so ahead. Be careful now.

I want you to listen to these scriptures that God holds out. Look at the groan of the elder. *Oh God, thou hast taught me from my youth: and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works. Now also when I am old, and grayheaded, O God, forsake me not; until I have shewed thy strength unto this generation, and thy power to every one that is to come.*³

"Hold fast and follow the pattern of wholesome and sound teaching which you have heard from me."

The old Paul now, talking to the young Timothy. "Hold fast and follow the pattern of wholesome and sound teaching which you heard from me, in [all] faith and love which are [for us] in Christ Jesus. Guard and keep [with the greatest care] the precious and excellently adapted [Truth] which has been entrusted [to you] ⁴ by me. Timothy, guard it, keep with the greatest care the precious and excellently adapted truth which has been entrusted to you, the Amplified says.

"The instructions which you have heard from me along with many witnesses, transmit and entrust [as a deposit] to reliable and faithful men who will be competent and qualified to teach others also⁵." We have to entrust it as a deposit to reliable and faithful men who will keep that standard. That's what we're doing, as elders.

The old Paul cries out to the young Timothy "I have fought the good fight, Timothy, I have finished my race. I have kept, firmly held, the faith. There's laid up a victor's crown for me. But Timothy, I entrust this to you now. Keep it, guard it, what you've learned of me."

Remember them that have the rule over you. The Amplified says "Remember your leaders and superiors in authority. . . Observe attentively, and consider their manner of living (the outcome of their well-spent lives) and imitate their faith (. . . their leaning of the entire human personality on God in absolute trust and confidence in His power, wisdom, and goodness).⁶" Listen to what God says about the elders who passed the baton on to me. I can give you names of men. When I say their names I say them in reverence at the memory of their lives. Thank God for their example. But listen to what God says:

³ Psalm 71:17

⁴ 2 Timothy 1:13 Amplified

⁵ 2 Timothy 2:2 Amplified

⁶ Hebrews 13:7 Amplified

“The [uncompromisingly] righteous shall flourish like the palm tree [be long-lived, stately, upright, useful, and fruitful]; they shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon [majestic, stable, durable, and incorruptible]. . . they shall still bring forth fruit in old age;. . . [They are living memorials]⁷” to show the younger generation of the Lord’s faithfulness to His promises. Living memorials. That’s what the elders are. To show the younger generation in their stateliness, their uprightness, their godliness, their uncompromisingly righteous life.

“Obey your spiritual leaders and submit to them [continually recognizing their authority over you], for they are constantly keeping watch over your souls and guarding your spiritual welfare, as men who will have to render account [of their trust]. [Do your part to] let them do this with gladness and not with sighing and groaning, for that would not be profitable to you [either].⁸”

Now I want the elders to look carefully right now at the younger, in the way God looks at them. This is something very precious to me. The elders must be very careful to look at the younger the way God looks at them, not on the human level. You’re going to make great mistakes in this race God has set before them also. He chooses so differently from what we do, what we look for. You don’t remember when we were boys, choosing teams in the park, when we’re going to play our game. It was a terrible thing to not be the real sporting type. They always chose the ones who were tough outwardly, you know. So one person was the team leader, the captain of whatever game we were going to play. The horrifying thing is you choose “Oh this one first.” So the next fellow chooses that one. It’s terrible when you’re the last one chosen. It’s terrible when you’re not very sporting.

You know, when Samuel was sent by God to choose the king, the person who God had chosen, he goes to Jesse’s family. He looks at the oldest of these strapping sons of Jesse, and he says “This must be him. Look at this man, to lead Israel, to be the future leader, the king. This is who God surely has chosen.”

“No,” God says, “not this one.”

The next one comes. “This must be him.” In the end, he chose the one they overlooked to even bring. He said “Is there no one else?”

“Oh yes, there’s little David.”

“Bring him.”

Here God bypasses the outward, what we would choose, these strapping, wonderful looking fellows, with all their abilities. They could fight as soldiers. Here was a little fellow tending the sheep. He comes, and God says “This is him.” God doesn’t look on the outward, as men do. “This is the one I’ve chosen.” And this was the right one. We mustn’t look on the outward. We see outwardly at the first happening. God’s so different in choosing those who will now run to win.

I remember my son Roy. You’ve heard about Samuel now. And Roy, he had a problem. He was so thin—he’s not anymore, thanks goodness—but he was so thin that we got into trouble. You can’t believe how thin Roy was. I said, “What on earth is wrong with him?” Just bones, you know. There was no flesh even, hardly any flesh, just bones. And I said, “What are we doing wrong?” We tried to feed him, we said “More! Eat more.”

Well, the principle of the school even called and said, “You know, the teachers are talking. We’re worried here. Do you feed this child?” Jenny was so embarrassed. She said “We really do feed him.”

Well, they took him to the hospital one day. The nurse said “I don’t know whether to report this. You’re neglecting this child.” We said, “We’re not.” We took him to the doctor. The doctor said, “Listen, don’t worry. He’s healthy. That’s all you’ve got to worry about. He’s fine. Don’t force him to eat.” Well, he was really thin. Poor little Roy, with a mop of white hair with a couple of crowns. We didn’t quite know what to do to keep it down. I used to have one crown, but he had crowns all over. Look for Roy, just look for this white hair, and crowns. He really looked out of place in life. Even his poor principle kept a watchful eye over him, fearing he was so brittle.

One day Roy stunned us. He had a cross-country. Now a cross-country is when you don’t just run around a track. They really set quite a few kilometers. At school they were going to have this cross-country around a golf course. They have very large golf courses in South Africa. They just go on and on.

We were all sitting up on the stands. All the teachers, and all the parents all around in the cars, looking at our children run. Then they all start running. Hundreds of boys in the cross-country. Roy of course ran also. He loved to talk. He wasn’t too interested in his run, you know. I watched him talking, you know, just talking. But he was running. We were all watching when suddenly he decided to run. We just

⁷ Psalm 92:12-15 Amplified

⁸ Hebrews 13:17 Amplified

saw this little fellow flying past everybody. Now I couldn't believe it. I said, "Is that Roy?" But the way he floated. It wasn't like he was running—just floating. I stood up and looked at this boy. The principle looked back at me. "It's Roy!" He didn't win. He would have by miles if he had started like that.

The next day I was going to fetch them at the school, and the sports master was coming toward me. Now everything I had to speak about to teachers was pretty fearful when we had to speak about Roy at school. We didn't know what was going to be coming. You know, I almost felt like something nice was going to be said about Roy by the sports master, so I looked at him coming toward me.

He said, "Mr. Daniel, did you see the way Roy run yesterday?"

I said, "Yes. It surprised me."

He said "You have a world champion on your hands here." I laughed. He said, "Oh, don't you laugh at me, sir, don't you laugh at me. I'm telling you something, sir. Don't push him. You'll break him. He's not mature enough. Don't push him to break him now that we see something's there. Show patience, and confidence. Don't criticize him. That's all he's wanting now. He's got it. World champion runners are born. Just look at the great runners in South Africa. They're all just thin fellows running along. Look at this fellow. He's a born runner. He's a runner, and that's all he is. But don't push him now. We have to just teach him, carefully. Teach him how to run. Give him a good start, good hints, when he's ready, when he's readied by our training to run to win. And he's going to win!"

Now be careful how we look, elders, at the young ones who seem to put despair in our hearts. We think "What's going to become of this fellow spiritually? What hope is there for this fellow? Look at him!" God sees differently, and I tell you in the long run that the ones that win in the spiritual race for Christ are the ones we didn't expect many times, most times, forgive me for saying. The ones with all their gifts and talents will somehow disappear, many times, not always. But the one that we thought of as helpless, hopeless, not going to make much, they just roar ahead. Listen to what Paul cries out to the young Timothy. *Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers*⁹. "Let no one despise or think less of you because of your youth, but be an example (pattern) for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, and in purity. Till I come, devote yourself to reading, to exhortation (preaching), and to teaching and instilling doctrine. Do not neglect the gift which is in you, [that special. . . endowment] which was directly imparted to you. . . Practice and cultivate. . . throw yourself wholly into them [as your ministry], so that your progress may be evident to everybody."¹⁰

Oh, you must be careful in now dealing with the runner God has chosen! If they fail at first, if they even cause disaster, if they fall badly, God says something wonderful here: *Ye which are spiritual*¹¹—I love that word. You'll soon see who's spiritual when you see who falls. Those who are not spiritual will condemn him, and wipe their hands of him, will not give him a chance. Those who are spiritual will fight for him. They just see the hope. They see what will come. You can notice a spiritual man by what happens when someone falls. The carnal will judge him, and wipe his hands of him, and want the failure out. Don't you doubt that.

I was once at the Bible school, the theological seminary where I went. We had a day we combined with another theological seminary. These two Bible schools have been going on for about 100 years. They've trained thousands of the best workers, the greatest of workers, on the mission field across our continent. They're revered, these two Bible colleges. Once a term we come together and having a time of fellowship, a time of fun, of laughter. We were young. Laughter isn't sin when you're young. Don't be old before your time, okay? So long as it's sanctified laughter, if it doesn't grieve God or man. There's a thin line there, and if you're right with God you'll never grieve anyone, or hurt anybody. No foolish jesting, but there's something about laughter, there's something about youth, don't lose.

We had laughter, and games. Two colleges together in the hall. We put socks together and passed this thing around, seeing who can get it to the other side. Lots of laughter with these young fellows. We were all playing against the other Bible college. While we were playing, and running around, we got a bit rough sometimes. This one girl, who was at Bible college with us, training to be a missionary, fell. She fell so hard it was just a gasp, and silence, right onto her face. Now I stood there, and looked. Suddenly, within seconds, I saw the reaction of every single person in that room. They all reacted differently when someone fell. You can't believe some of the reactions. There were some there who obviously didn't have much time for her. They started laughing, though she lay in agony. Some shaking their heads, clicking their tongue. At

⁹ 1 Timothy 4:12

¹⁰ 1 Timothy 4:12-15 Amplified

¹¹ Galatians 6:1

a Bible school! Laughing when someone falls. Because you don't have time for them. Clicking your tongue, shaking your head when someone falls. There were some standing there, shocked at the fall, but unable to help, incapable, nothing in them that would help. They just look when someone falls, in shock. They don't do a thing. When I saw this reaction, and I saw no one was going to do a thing but laugh, click their tongues, and look, I ran, and I lifted her up.

I was the only one who had the privilege of seeing the gratitude in those eyes. She was more hurt by what people had seen. She was more embarrassed than physically hurt. Someone had lifted her up. I said to her "I'm not going to let you go till you can look me in the eyes and say 'I'm alright.' Are you alright? You're not going to fall? You can stand? I'm not going to let you go. Don't worry." And the gratitude in those eyes for the one who helped her up when she fell, no one else saw those eyes. No one else saw that gratitude.

The weak fall. God says "Ye that are spiritual, you go lift them up. Taking care of yourself, but you are the ones I look to, to lift them up." Are you spiritual? When someone falls in the spiritual world. *Ye which are spiritual*. You'll be known by that, you know. Be careful in this race when someone falls. There's the other way also. We must remember this, please. If we see someone who's been in the race a long time, not just someone who is the elder, looking down, or those on the road looking down at someone falling, at the young, and saying "Oh, no good here." Be careful. It works the other way too, and it's going to happen in your life, I guarantee you. It's going to happen in your church, I guarantee you. I don't say that I want it to happen, but I've seen something in all missions, in all movements. We see someone who's been in the race a long time fall, then nearing the end of their race. It's possible they could fall, you know. What do you do? Excommunicate them. Somehow, in the weariness of life it happens that those who've ran the race for a long, long time. We must be careful not to judge, not to throw them out, but to encourage them to get up. Not condemn them. It could happen to you! What you do to others I guarantee comes on you one day. So be careful. I've seen it. There's a circle. I've seen it with people. I've watched how they did it. I saw it coming back on them, and everybody did to them just what they did, when it happened to others. It could happen to you. If someone in the race a long time falls, don't you as young people look down on them. Even if they cause despair, encourage them with compassion, not to give up, but to get up.

The greatest race in South Africa is a world renown race. The best runners of the world go to South Africa to this race, now it's become so esteemed across the world. It called the Comrades Marathon. It's the most grueling race in Africa, there's no doubt of that. One of the most grueling races in the world. When I was a boy Daddy took us to see this race. He knew all the runners, even my uncles were in the race. Some of them won. We as children would be taken there by Daddy, who loved to see this race. He encouraged them, he drove alongside of them. "Come on, it's not far!" He handed water out to them when they needed it. In the early days before all these points were set up, and everything became so professional, there was Daddy when we were boys. We knew most of the runners. People came to our home, the winners. Daddy loved the sport of running.

I'll never forget this one year. We were going along with Daddy. We used to go the whole way with the car, get out of the car and run sometimes with them, or stand there cheering. There was the finishing this one particular year that shocked me. It always ended in Pietermaritzburg, or back to Durban, vice versa each year, some 70 or 80 miles. Well, there was a big sports stadium, where the crowd would all go at the end, and there would be these ribbons, making a passage around the field, right down to the center where the winner would run. Oh the end of this race, along the roads, all up the mountains, down the hills, through the valleys, up and down, up and down, until this gruesome, almost mountain, before you get up to Pietermaritzburg, the city where it all ended. There we drove in, and we were waiting for the winner to run in. Along he came, this strapping fellow. He ran like the wind, right at the end. Where did his strength come after all those miles? It's unbelievable, that last strength to run. He ran, and the crowd cheered, and I cheered as a little boy, looking at this fellow coming in until the ribbon was gone.

And then the second last fellow came in, the one who was second to win. Here he came in. But this fellow was tired. He was ahead of others. There were, oh, a few thousand, I think, though something like ten thousand start these days. Very few finish. Here was this fellow, the second to come in. He wasn't running like the first fellow, though he was way ahead of most. Here he was, tired, finished, exhausted, pulling himself as he got on the field. But the crowds cheered. Oh they cheered "Come on!" And as he was coming in his weariness at the end, it had been so hard for him, that race, suddenly he fell. He fell. And he began to crawl. The crowd's just saying "Go on! Get up!" He got up, and he started running the wrong direction. He started running. He went back. He was stupefied in his tiredness, and in his weariness. He started going back. I'll never forget the crowds. My daddy just burst into tears. I looked around, and there

was not one who wasn't weeping. No one was condemning him. Everyone was just in agony, crying, "You're going the wrong way! You're going the wrong way, turn around! Please! Listen! Turn around!" He didn't hear. Eventually it got through. He turns and faced the right way again, and starts, not with strength, but going. Cries of the crowd encouraging him. "Go on! Go on!" Until he came through to the end of the race. You know, that man got more applause than the winner. He deserved it far more than the winner. He made it, though he crawled, though he fell, though he went the wrong way sometimes. We don't stand condemning them when it happens. You just cry in compassion and love "Get up!" Don't give anyone up in his race.

I'm so glad I can end with this, because it meant a lot to me as a boy. I loved the National Geographic magazine, and they particularly went after a young fellow, in Australia, who shook the whole world, when I was a young fellow. This young teenage boy decided he was going to go across the whole world on a single sailing boat, with no engine, no radio control, no special equipment and or foods, or safety devices. Sir Francis Chisester of England was the only man who'd ever done that on one single sailing boat, but he had engines in case something went wrong. He had radio controls. He had all things brought in of the best equipment, the best food, to help with every sickness. Here this little fellow's taking no equipment. He was going to go across the whole world by one single sail. Chisester said, "Don't let him do it. He'll die. He'll never make it. You can't do it."

He set off from Australia in this little yacht of his. Single sail. Off he goes. The National Geographic started looking when he actually made it to the next continent. He made it with nobody following him. He was there. They came to him and said "Look, we're going to take photographs. We want you to take photographs. We want to put it right across every step you take, seeing as you're so serious about this." I used to wait for each issue. "How far is this fellow now? Has he got any further? Is he finished, is he drowned? Has he given up?" No one was really taking it too seriously, you know, but the National Geographic made it become something people everywhere were aware of.

Well, this fellow just went on, almost to my country across the great Atlantic Ocean. And as he was, oh I don't know, maybe a few hundred kilometers out in the sea still—the storms there are the most ferocious in the world, I believe, the cape of storms. This little fellow was in a storm where the sail was smashed, the boat began to fill up with water, then the storm subsided and the sun came on him. The food was gone, and the water was gone. No land. He just lay there, ready to die, floating, the heat of the sun burning through him. Sunstroke. Somehow the boat drifted up through right to where Jenny and I live, Cape Town. Just out of Cape town in the Hout Bay area. This fishing trawler was going along, and they saw this little thing, filled with water. They drew alongside, and there's a body. Smashed boat. No sail, no mast. They took this body, got to the shore, got him to the hospital. Somehow, miraculously, he regained strength. They saved him.

They had to put him into a mental home. His mind had gone, with the sun. He went through all the treatments, try to bring him back to a way where he could function again in life. Then he did something one day when the newspaper reporters were talking about this terrible thing he'd endured, when he finally got out of that institution. He said, "I'm going on."

His father flew from Australia, and said "You're not going on. No. I'm putting my foot down."

"I'm going on, and nothing is gonna stop me. I'm finishing what I set out to do."

Now the whole world suddenly took notice. On the front pages of the newspapers: "This boy's going on!" National Geographic, main article, front page, was right through, pictures, stories. Suddenly the world was looking at someone who wouldn't give up. Restoring his little boat himself, working in it, no help, till it was ready to go. Off he goes, and absolute silence, weeks, and weeks, and weeks, and weeks. Then he was sighted. Had gone right around the world, back to Australia.

When it was realized who had been sighted out there, things started happening. Royalty from England came. The Prime Minister of Australia came. His home town came in masses. Orchestras, brass bands, flags, thousands, stands. He didn't know what was waiting, by the by. Here he comes, oblivious to what was coming. All he knew was he's making it. Then suddenly all the boats in their thousands coming out, blowing the foghorns. Helicopters were hovering over, photographing him. He looked at all these, and suddenly realized it was for him! They're all welcoming him. As he comes in the harbor he hears the bands, the orchestras, sees all the crowds and hears the applause. He stood up, tears coming down his face. He realizes this is for him. They were photographing him. Then they got a hold of him and they asked him this question, that was the end of the articles of him. The last words in the National Geographic as they showed his photograph of the tears as he looked at the crowds welcoming him, screaming him on. They said "What

went on in your mind when you saw and realized that welcome was for you? That they were cheering you? What did you think?"

He said "I thought to myself 'To think I nearly gave up. To think how I came to nearly giving up. I would have missed this.' Then I thought 'But that doesn't matter. It doesn't matter that I nearly gave up. It doesn't matter that I lay dying. All that matters to me is that I didn't give up. I made it.' That's what I was thinking."

Beloved, it doesn't matter if sometimes you crawled in the race. It doesn't matter that you went backward at times, until you heard in the compassion of those that loved you. You went back as they cried, you went back on the right path. It doesn't matter if you nearly gave up time and time again. All that matters is that one day you will look at the welcome God gives you, and the crowds of witnesses, and you see the face of Jesus, the One you ran for, and the joy that you gave Him, though you once crawled.

Can I end with these words? Will you listen carefully? In case the baton is on the ground in many of your lives, fallen from your hands, it isn't carefully in your hands yet, or in your heart, the standard, the doctrine. In case you haven't submitted your heart to the elder's message and standard of truth, so you have it firmly gripped in your hands and life and heart, and you know you're not going to let loose of it. You're going to run with it, you're going to keep it, and win this race that they ran and passed on to you the standard, right to the end you're going to carry it, you have such a firm grip. In case you rebel against this message, separation from worldliness and a high standard of holiness in this world, no matter how unholy the rest of the world becomes. In case you're rebelling against the message God wants you to take up in your heart. In case you as an elder are tired and weary through the generation that you're with, exhausted at the end of your course, and you haven't with carefulness and sense of urgent responsibility be sure the younger get that baton through you. In case you're criticizing them, and have no patience with this generation, and you haven't accepted all of them as God's choice. You've failed to hand it to them patiently, knowing that whom God chooses will win. You'll just pass the baton carefully and train them till they grasp it.

I need to ask God today—just in case I haven't got this baton, in case my heart hasn't embraced it so firmly, the standard, the generation of elders—I need to ask God for fresh consecration. I need to dedicate myself here freshly to this great call of God. Perhaps I need to dedicate afresh right now as never before in my life to run with patience the race that is set before me by God, the standard I have to run, the baton I have to carry right to the finishing post. In case you need to dedicate your lives to that which is held out to you before you leave this place as youth to go on and run. In case you need to dedicate. What you dedicate God consecrates. You need to let God consecrate you afresh, and you need to dedicate yourself to this race afresh because it hasn't been firmly set in your heart: "Oh God I'm going to take everything, and I'm going to hold on. As an elder I'm going to look at them differently, and I'm never going to despair of anyone, or look upon them as useless or worthless. They're the ones You chose. That's why they're here, God. I'm going to dedicate myself as an elder afresh to this race I'm in, to do my part as an elder, to do my part as a younger to make it easy for the elders to take it. To take it without any fight, without any grief to them."

This booklet was transcribed from a message preached by Keith Daniel at the 1997 Charity Youth Bible School. Transcribed and adapted by Elissa Hege, Gospel Tape Transcriptions, 2006.

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