

August 5, 2019

Dear Members, Co-Workers and Friends,

In 1961, I was partaking of a track meet in Langley, British Columbia, as the second leg of a four-by-one-hundred-yard relay. The race started off well and by the time the first runner reached me, we were in second place. After the passing of the baton, I had to put all my effort into catching up to the first runner, and about halfway, I actually passed him. The pass-off to the third runner went smoothly and now being in first place, I thought we would come in first, and it looked like a sure victory. Unfortunately, the final pass-off went poorly, and we were overtaken and came in second.

Even though we finished the race in a disappointing second place, we did finish, which is the important thing.

I watched on TV a runner in a quarter-mile race, and about three-quarters of the way through, he suffered an injury of some kind—a pulled muscle or tendon. He had been in a good position to win the race, but was slowed down to a walk, which he continued to the finish line with a standing ovation from the crowd, applauding him for not quitting in spite of his injury.

The apostle Paul talks about the race we are in as Christians. 1 Corinthians 9:24-26 says: "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. 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. Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air."

The admonition is to run in a manner to receive the prize of eternal life. From a spiritual standpoint, this does not mean that we have to come in first; only, that we have to finish the race without quitting.

Quitting or dropping out gives us nothing in a way of reward. Notice Hebrews 12:1: "Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us..."

Notice the admonition here which is to run with endurance and to keep our eyes on the crown to be given to us, and not to be sidetracked by the cares of this world's distractions of everyday life which amount to frivolous things in comparison.

Our race and purpose is to be engaged in the preaching of the gospel which is the real reason all of us have been called at this time. We are to stay focused and to endure to the finish line in order to obtain the crown of salvation as our prize.

In the scope of enduring to the end, our reward can increase—the more we repent and overcome and utilize the talents God gives us, the more we can achieve a higher position of rulership in the Kingdom of God.

Let us look at David's attitude towards his reward:

Psalm 84:10 states: "For a day in Your courts is better than a thousand. I would rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God Than dwell in the tents of wickedness."

He would be happy to be the doorkeeper as long as he was there in the Kingdom. We know of course that he will be king over the nation of Israel in the future, as Jeremiah 30:9 tells us: "But they shall serve the LORD their God, And David their king, Whom I will raise up for them." Ezekiel 37:23-24 adds: "They shall not defile themselves anymore with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions; but I will deliver them from all their dwelling places in which they have sinned, and will cleanse them. Then they shall be My people, and I will be their God. David My servant shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd; they shall also walk in My judgments and observe My statutes, and do them."

Remember the parable of the minas (Luke 19:11-27)? The ten servants started each with one mina. One servant gained ten minas. He was given authority over ten cities. (If he had put in less effort, he may have been given rule over perhaps nine cities instead.) But another one who had also received one mina gained nothing, and so even the mina which he had received was taken away from him. This is tantamount to our not running the race of supporting the Work; to our not continuously serving, repenting and overcoming, while thinking instead that just holding on to the truth in a little corner, without using and applying it, is good enough.

Rulership positions will be given as rewards for our efforts in supporting the Work of God and overcoming.

Certain positions have already been assigned. Notice what Christ said to John and his brother, in Matthew 20:23: "So He said to them, 'You will indeed drink My cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with; but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it is prepared by My Father.'"

As potential rulers, we should strive to go the distance to achieve the best possible position available to us, which Christ is anxious to give us. For instance, we read in Matthew 19:28 that Christ told His early apostles: "... 'Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.'"

The first resurrection is the better resurrection (Hebrews 11:35) because we cannot die anymore and also because we will already be part of the management team under Christ in the Millennium. As the human family grows in the Millennium, so will our responsibilities grow as managers and rulers, working with and directing potential children of God.

God has placed an awesome future before every member of His Church. We need to look to that future with joy and anticipation. We need to run with endurance and to finish the race, so that we will receive our full reward as rulers and the gift of eternal life as our crown for being victorious winners.

With Christian love,



Rene Messier (Canada)