

# Listening for the Promise

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL

Tenth Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 15) – August 14, 2022

*“Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, ... let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith.”*

–Hebrews 12:1–2–

Recently I have found myself getting back into a jogging routine. It’s something I picked up during the spring of 2020 when the whole world came to a halt due to the Covid-19 pandemic. I’ve never considered myself a runner, but years ago, I participated in the Fargo Marathon, jogging/walking the 5K and 10K races. My goal for those races: to finish. And I did. I couldn’t believe how much of it I had jogged. So, I set a new goal: to complete a half marathon (13.1 miles) before I turn 40. I just turned 39 a month ago, so 40 is creeping up quickly. As I’ve been training to jog/walk, I have learned the importance of endurance. One definition put it this way: endurance is to “last through something unpleasant; to suffer.” Well, I can’t argue with that! I’ve learned that it doesn’t matter how long it takes me to walk, or jog, or even crawl to complete 13.1 miles. My form, the clothes I wear – they don’t matter much. What matters most is that I finish it. And that takes endurance!

As Christian believers, we, too, are running, jogging, walking, and even crawling this race called life. One of the most attractive parts of the Fargo Marathon was the crowds on the sidelines, cheering on all the race participants. They cheered for me! I didn’t know any of them, but there they were, cheering me to keep going, to cross that finish line. That is like the cloud of witnesses we have in the race of life. At times, we feel alone. But if we recall God’s promise that we’re “surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses” (v. 1), that can help us endure what lies ahead. We can remember some of the “greats” in faith: Abraham and Sarah, the twelve disciples, Paul, and the list goes on. We can also call to mind those who’ve gone before us to the Church Triumphant – parents, grandparents, godparents, Sunday School teachers, pastors. We look to their lives and see how they ran the race. It gives us encouragement and strength to push forward, to keep our eye on the end prize: Jesus Christ. May we, too, endure the race of life to the very end, and may we become a part of the cloud of witnesses, cheering on those who follow us.

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