

beautiful

LIVES THAT SHOW THE GOSPEL

Message Topic: Fanny Lou Hamer and the Beauty of Perseverance

Message Date: November 22, 2020

Focus: The beauty of not giving up

Primary biblical text: Hebrews 12

Introduction

Our goal is to engage in conversations about the beautiful life that Jesus has called us to live. Each week, we will be unpacking an element of this life. Each topic is paired with a historical figure who will show us one way to embody each week's topic.

Purpose of Community Groups

To engage with the ideas and scripture presented in the messages, to build connections with each other, and apply what we have learned to our lives.

Gathering

(Choose some of these this week to help people get to know each other.)

Mixer Questions:

What's the biggest sporting event or performance you've ever been to?

If you were a participant, what did it feel like to hear the crowd cheer you on?

If you were cheering, what did it feel like to encourage others? Why did you cheer?

Message Content

Review Message: Christian shared this week about Fanny Lou Hamer, a faithful Christian who was given a race to run by God. She worked for years to ensure that all people have a right to vote regardless of their skin color because she believed that a government “for the people, by the people” should mean “for *all* people, by *all* people” of this nation. She faced incredible resistance to her work, but she was undeterred. God gave her a race to run, and when that happens to us, our responsibility is to run with perseverance. Like Fanny Lou Hamer, each person is given a race to run by God. Our responsibility is to pay attention to where God is calling us to be faithful, and then to run in that. Look at Jesus, run the race God has called you to, persevere through it all. God is with you in your journey, you can trust him.

Discussion Questions: (pick one or two)

1. What stood out to you from the message? What thought or idea do you remember the most and why?
2. Has there ever been anything in your life that you've had to wait years for?
3. What is something you are waiting for or persevering in right now?

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Scripture Study

Read Hebrews 11:1–12:3

1. Who is in Paul’s cloud of witnesses?
2. Who is in your cloud of witnesses? Who are the people that encourage you?
3. What race is Paul talking about here?
4. Why are the runners running? What are they running towards?
5. What role do the witnesses play in supporting the runners?

Personal Reflection

Perseverance:

1. What race are you running?
2. What helps you to keep going? What things can you do this winter to be able to hold on a bit longer?
3. What prevents you from running? What do you need to lay aside to run better?
4. What spiritual disciplines are the most helpful for you to help you not lose faith and persevere? (prayer, scripture reading, silence, fasting, worship, etc.)
5. List any other scriptures that help you persevere.

Challenge

1. Choose one thing (i.e., news, social media, eating junk food, binge watching, spending time with a toxic person) to “throw off” for the next 40 days.
2. Choose one thing (i.e., set aside time to pray and read the Bible each day, take a daily walk, call a friend each day, serve somewhere, clean out a closet and donate the stuff, listen to worship music, learn something new) to help you persevere and run the race.

Prayer:

Gracious Father, you call us to yourself, and you have prepared the way for us through Jesus. We cannot do life without you. We confess that we do not look to you as the author and perfecter of our faith, but rather as the one who guarantees our own hopes and dreams. But this is not how it should be. You alone know where you are calling us. You alone say, “this is the way, walk in it.” We need your mercy and grace as we struggle to persevere in your ways. Forgive us for straying and struggling to trust you.

“We believe, help our unbelief.”

As we look to you right now, we pray that you would call us to more than we can imagine. Help us to find the race that each of us has been called to run, and then to run that race boldly and with perseverance. Help us to know that there is a crowd cheering us on, encouraging us, and supporting us from ages past. Show us the freedom that comes from fixing our eyes upon Jesus and trusting that you alone are both the author and perfecter of our faiths. We thank you for the Holy Spirit and pray, “come Holy Spirit, guide us.”

All this we lift up in Jesus’ name, Amen.