

**To Be a Somebody  
(The One That Made It)**

Matthew 10:24-42

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Forty-two years, four months, and nine months ago, one billion—*one billion*—stood poised and ready. One billion in the epididymis on Red Alert. At just the right moment, at the given signal, they sprang into the vas deferens, up the ductus deferens, past the seminal vesicles, and into the urethra, from whence they were launched into the vaginal cavity, at which time a furious battle ensued—a race for survival. Hundreds upon hundreds of millions would die at this point. However, a few (the proud, the strong)—a few million—made it to the cervix.

In the past, countless billions had died before this critical gateway, but on this particular day, at this particular moment, the gate was open, the mucousal barrier having reached the perfect level of viscosity and permeability. Perhaps a million made it through. Of those, hundreds of thousands perished racing to their death in the wrong fallopian tube. Of those that chose correctly, countless thousands more perished in the seemingly endless folds of the fallopian structure. And out of that one billion, just a few—the elite, the strong, the survivors, the fittest—made it to the vicinity of the fertile and ripened ovum. They swam, strove, and fought for the prize. And out of one billion—*one billion*—only *one* made it. Only one became a somebody. *I am that somebody!*

Out of one billion, I am the sperm that made it!

When I feel like a failure, when I feel inferior, when I feel like a loser, I can remember that I am the sperm that *made it!* When people ridicule me and say I'm a nobody, I can tell them, "Out of one billion, I'm the sperm that made it!"

That's who I am.

That's what I learned in school.

The sperm that made it.

Unfortunately, it wasn't long before I realized that there were roughly five billion *other* sperm that made it in this world, and they were still swimming. I was still in a race.

So I remember thinking, "If only I get to first grade, I'll be somebody." But in first grade I had to compete against a bunch of other first graders so I could get to second grade and be somebody. I remember thinking, "If I get to sixth grade, I'll be somebody"; then, "If I get to junior high and have a locker, I'll be somebody."

In junior high it was really clear: In sports, academia, and social situations, to be a somebody you had to *beat* somebody. To win, someone had to *lose*. To be somebody you had to win the violent, competitive struggle of life.

I remember thinking, "If I graduate from high school and get accepted into college, I'll be somebody."

I remember thinking, "If I get better grades than the other students in seminary, I'll be somebody."

I remember thinking, "If I beat the other candidates for pastor, then I'll really be somebody, the most loving,

humble, servant pastor that applied. And if the church is large and my family is handsome and if I write a book, well, *then* I'll really be somebody: the pastor that made it."

Yet I still live with a constant fear that I'm not a somebody but a *nobody*; not a winner but a loser.

When I lived in California, I was friends with Pat Richie, the chaplain for the 49ers, who at the time were perennially the team that made it. I remember him saying that there were a disproportionately large number of Christians in the NFL, and that he thought it was because so many had reached the top of the ladder only to find it was leaning against the wrong building. That is, they had won the race only to find they'd been racing in the wrong direction. They had won the game only to find out it was the wrong game.

Do you ever feel like you're the biggest winner at being a loser? Because the more you become a somebody, the more you feel like a nobody. The harder you try to win, the more you fear you've lost . . . your soul. So you run faster, trying to gain the world, looking for your soul. And the world chants, "Run! Go! Go! Go! You could be somebody! You could win the award! You could be in Who's Who and become a Who! You could be most spiritual at bible study! You could have perfect kids! You could be someone, be someone, be someone!"

So you run.

Last week we began looking at Matthew 10 where Jesus appoints His twelve apostles and gives them authority

(exousia), meaning *power, authority, and freedom*. We spoke of how the disciples were a threat to the “principalities and powers, the thrones and authorities” of this world, but that they were free from the powers of this world. Persecuted but free.

Matthew 10:24:

*“A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master; it is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Be-elzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household. So have no fear of them . . . .”*

“Have no fear of them.” The world controls you by defining success and judging your progress. So you’ll run harder and never ask why you’re running the direction you are. You know, as soon as you receive blame or praise from somebody, you’re agreeing with their definition of the race and surrendering to their control in fear. We think that’s only true for blame, but it’s especially true for praise. It’s how the world controls us, drives us, and makes us run.

I remember in high school there was a little boy who used to always hang around my friends and me at church. When he’d get on my nerves, I’d say, “Hey, Russell, you’re a great runner! I bet you couldn’t run around the whole church five times!” Russell would go off running, and I’d talk to my friends. When he’d come back, I’d say, “Wow! You’re an awesome runner! You think you could do that ten times?” And he’d run again.

It's the way the advertising industry works. I have this ad I saved that says, "Be bold. Be original. Be yourself." Then it tells you how to be yourself by shopping at Kmart.

"You could drive a Lexus!"  
 "You could smell like Eternity!"  
 "Be somebody!"

The world defines success and tells you to compete for it, because there's only so much of it.

It's how education works:  
 Get an "A" and be somebody.  
 We grade on a curve.

It's how society works:  
 Beat your neighbor and be someone.

It's how human religion works:  
 Pride, envy, competition, and shame.

"Be better than them; be a winner," which means making someone else a loser. It's "survival of the fittest." All somebodies, all life, are those that have won the violent, competitive race to survive. Our scientists tell us it's true.

You say, "That's only natural." *Of course* it's only natural. You say, "That's the way of the world." *Exactly*.

It's the "principalities and powers, thrones and authorities of this world." Society, governments, religions, families . . . They control you; they drive you with praise, then blame, then shame, then competition, then fear for yourself. And Jesus

says, “Don’t fear them. They’ve called the master of the house Be-elzebul.” So perhaps they’re not very good judges. In fact, they may not even be running in the right direction.

Verse 26:

*“So have no fear of them; for nothing is covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known.”*

The powers of this world will be exposed, and you can’t win—you can’t be somebody—through lies and manipulation, posturing and posing.

*“What I tell you in the dark, utter in the light; and what you hear whispered, proclaim upon the housetops. And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell”* (literally “Gehenna”—it was a burning garbage dump outside Jerusalem).

There’s only One to fear, and He gave us the law and told us to obey. We’re to be perfect as He is perfect, and “nothing is covered that won’t be revealed.” That’s quite a race to run.

So now you may be thinking, “Great, Peter. I don’t have to fear the principalities and powers of this world, but only *God* who can throw me into the garbage dump of Hell!”

Verse 29:

*“Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground without your Father’s*

*will. But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.”*

Fear God who can destroy in Hell. Therefore, fear not. You're worth more than two sparrows.

Gosh, that's crystal clear (not) . . . yet it feels true. When you were a child, if you had a good daddy, you knew that there was really only one person in your life to fear: Dad. Yet if you feared him, you knew there was nothing to fear, including him.

Proverbs says, “Fear is the beginning of wisdom.” John the beloved disciple writes, “There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear.” Fear is the beginning of wisdom, but love must be the end—the perfection—the finish line. Jesus is the wisdom of God and the love of God manifested.

Maybe Jesus is the one I'm running for.

Next verse . . .

*“So every one who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven; but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven. Do not think that I have come to bring peace on earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man's foes will be those of his own household.”*

As we preached last week, to follow Jesus is to be a threat to the systems, energy, and direction of this world. They're running for self, and you're running the opposite direction. They can't understand you or control you.

*“He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and he who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.”*

We're running for Christ, but who could ever be “worthy of Christ”? He says to “take up your cross.” Now, when He said “take up your cross,” the disciples did not think of going to Macy's and picking up one for \$19.95. They also did not think of our heroes of faith and mercy (St. Francis, Martin Luther King, and Mother Teresa). They had not yet been to Easter, and they did not have 2000 years of Church history. They thought of profound humiliation and shame. A cross meant you were utterly last and least by society's standards and by God's standards.

Crucifixion wasn't only designed to kill a person but also to utterly humiliate a person; to kill not only their body but also their spirit. It was a punishment reserved for the worst criminals and for slaves, who were paraded through town, stripped naked, and flogged. They were then lashed or nailed to a cross and lifted high in a public place where they might take several days to die as they were mocked by the crowd.

To take up a cross was to say in the most emphatic way, “My life is a loss. Race over. I lost, I'm a failure, I am the last and the least.” Not only the last, but *condemned*. Deuteronomy 21:23: “For anyone hung on a tree is cursed by God.”

Jesus says, “Take up your cross,” and you can only “take it up,” for you see, the self fails at even crucifying the self.

A few years ago, Jose Forero and two friends in the town of Cartago, Columbia nailed themselves to wooden crosses to fortify their demands for a salary increase and benefits at their government jobs. That sounds like some prayer meetings I’ve been to. But that’s not crucifixion; that’s extortion. To be crucified is to deserve nothing, demand nothing, manipulate nothing, control nothing. To suicide is not to take up your cross. That’s the self controlling self—self judging self—not the death of self. And to do nothing—to be lazy—is not taking up your cross. Laziness is not losing self but saving self. It’s guarding self rather than surrendering self.

Perhaps we must run to know we fail.

Perhaps we must try to win to see that we’re losers.

Perhaps we must try to fulfill the law to know we can’t.

Perhaps we have to run to run out.

Perhaps we have to expend ourselves to come to the end of ourselves.

I don’t know, but humility is not something *I* can accomplish and then be proud of. Humility is something I surrender to and Christ accomplishes in me when I come to the end of myself.

Jesus said,

“He who does not take up his cross is not worthy of me.” That is:

“He who does not admit he’s unworthy is not worthy of me.”

“He who does not admit he’s a loser will never win.”

Next verse:

*“He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for my sake will find it.”*

Sometimes in worship, when I’m anxious, frustrated, ashamed, afraid, and feeling guilty yet longing for Jesus, I’ll have this picture flash into my mind and heart. My arm is thrown back against the wood, and a nail is driven through my wrist. And my other arm is thrown back and nailed down the same way. Then I worship Jesus in real joy and feel grateful. As if to say, “Oh, thank you, Jesus! Thank you for taking care of him. He’s so full of himself—nervous, anxious, insecure; he’s caused me nothing but trouble, keeping me awake all night long!” And in a small way, I lose myself and find myself lost in Jesus, *happy*.

As if joy and love are a kingdom all around me.  
As if joy and love are the default made of all reality,  
And my self is its own little prison in bondage  
To the powers of this world.

But losing self I’m free (exousia), and I have power over the powers. Like Paul said, “I glory in the cross, by which the world has been crucified to me and I to the world.”

So when the world—the “principalities and powers,” society, religion, family, your flesh—try to tell you who you are, try to fill you with praise so as to control you with shame and drive you with pride, anxiety, envy, competition, greed, insecurity, and fear for self, when they say, “You need this, you need that, you’d better do this, you’d better do that, because you could *win* instead of *lose*! What if you were a *loser*?” . . . take

up your cross and say with great joy: “I’ve already lost!” And having already lost, you’ve already won (in Christ). You’re free (exousia).

An anxious, driven man sat in a psychologist’s office waiting in fear. The psychologist said, “Your test results are back, and I have good news. You don’t have an inferiority complex. You actually *are* inferior.” You see: That’s *good news*. You can stop running in fear! You have nothing to lose! “It is a consoling idea,” wrote Kierkegaard, “that before God we are always in the wrong.”

So when they accuse you trying to extort you, say, “Yes, I am guilty, more than you know.” Then the Accuser is disarmed. When they say you’re a loser and a failure and deserve to be hung, say, “Thank you, for a servant is not greater than his master, and my Master bore a cross.” When they say, “You’re a nobody,” take up a cross and say, “Hallelujah! In and of myself, I am a nobody.” But then you’re *His* body, and then you are *somebody* (exousia).

“Unless you take up your cross, you’re not worthy of me,” said Jesus. You’re not worthy if you don’t admit you’re unworthy. And Jesus said, “You’re worth far more than two sparrows.” What a strange thing to say!

Two chapters ago, Jesus cleanses a leper as a sign that He takes our curse. He tells the leper to offer the gift commanded by Moses as a testimony. It involved the sacrifice of a lamb. But first it involved a ceremony with two birds—two sparrows:

1. They were taken outside the camp. (Jesus was crucified outside the camp — Hebrews 13:12.)
2. There the worshipper was to kill one bird in an earthen vessel . . . (We are earthen vessels.)
3. . . . as water ran over the earthen vessel. (We're baptized in water.)
4. Then the priest was to take scarlet, hyssop, and cedar and dip them and the living bird in the blood, then sprinkle the bird seven times with the blood, then pronounce the living bird clean and let it fly away.

For 1200 years, the Jews did that and didn't know why, but they saw it and felt it: Their redemption cost life.

You know that Jesus died that we might live. He took our loss that we might win. He took our curse that we might be cleansed. The first Adam (us) is washed in the blood of the Second Adam (Jesus).

- Paul said, "We are always carrying in our body the death of Jesus so the life of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh."
- And "we have this treasure in earthen vessels, to show the transcendent power belongs to God."
- And "one fine morning when this life is over, I'll fly away. Like a bird through prison bars has flown, I'll fly away."

Because Jesus did not.

You see, you are worth far more than a sparrow. You're worth *Jesus*. But that's not your doing. It's *His*. You don't make yourself valuable; God makes you valuable. And there's

nothing more valuable than you, by grace. So confess that you of yourself are a nobody, and you'll be *His* body, and that is *somebody*.

You know, we're all racing to be somebody, but all become like nobody. We're all racing to die—to lose. We all suffer under the curse—death. Yet actually one Adam *did* make it. He is The Somebody.

Years ago, I heard Tony Campolo joke that he was the sperm that made it. This week I realized: Jesus is the promised seed that made it. Paul wrote: “To Abraham and his seed [“sperma” in Greek] were the promises made. He does not say ‘and to seeds,’ as of many, but as of one, ‘and to your seed,’ which is Christ.”

Actually, Christ ran the race and fulfilled the law. He is the fittest, yet He chose not to survive, that we would. He chose to suffer for us and never leave nor forsake us. So Paul continues, “If you are Christ’s, you are Abraham’s seed [singular] and heirs according to the promise.”

In Christ, you're “the seed that made it.” You are somebody. And so the author of Hebrews writes, “Since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith.” We're to run for Jesus.

Paul writes (I Corinthians 9:24-25):

“Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize?” (The one is Jesus.)

“Run in such a way as to get the prize.” (Well, how could we catch Jesus? He’d have to come back for us.)

“They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever.” (That would be Christ’s crown.)

Matthew 27: “They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, and plaiting a crown of thorns they put it on his head.” The whole world had been running in the wrong direction. You see, they thought the crown was shame, but that crown is glory. The crown is love.

Jesus ran the race, and He could have won without pain and shame, but He chose to come for us. Jesus is the Father come for us. He chose to lose that we might win with Him. His victory was the triumph of love over the powers of this world.

A few years ago at the Seattle Special Olympics, nine contestants, all physically or mentally disabled, assembled at the starting line for the 100-yard dash. At the gun, they all started out, not exactly in a dash, but with the relish to run the race. The crowd chanted and cheered, “Go! Go! Go! Run! Run! Run!” And they all did.

All, that is, except one boy who stumbled on the asphalt, tumbled over a couple of times, and began to cry. The other eight heard the boy cry. They slowed down and paused. Then

they all turned around and went back. Every one of them. The crowd grew silent as one girl with Down's syndrome bent down, kissed him, and said, "This will make it better." Then all nine linked arms and walked together to the finish line. Together as one body—*somebody*. Everyone in the stadium stood, and the cheering went on for ten minutes.

I believe they were cheering with the great cloud of witnesses, cheering the harvest of faith and mercy: that is, love; that is, God. One fell and eight went back. In this world, all fell . . . and One went back. He's always going back for the last and the least. He lives to die.

The whole world is running in one direction,  
and Jesus runs just the opposite way.  
He wants you to run with Him.

The great theologian Lily Tomlin said, "Even if you win the rat race you're still a rat." The only way to really win the rat race is to chose to lose and run with Jesus. Then you're not a nobody; you're *His* body, and that's *some body!*

Listen closely:

*"He who receives you receives me, and he who receives me receives him who sent me. He who receives a prophet because he is a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward, and he who receives a righteous man because he is a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. And whoever gives to one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple, truly, I say to you, he shall not lose his reward."*

Your reward is not a house, car, boat, or diploma. It's not a plaque or a title or a special parking space. This world runs for rewards that have nothing to do with the race. So they hate the race, they hate the other runners, and they hate to run. They do not relish the race.

But "Heaven offers nothing that a mercenary soul can desire," writes Lewis. "There are rewards that do not sully motives. A man's love for a woman is not mercenary because he wants to marry her. . . ." Likewise, a woman's love for the man is not mercenary because she wants to marry him.

Bride of Christ, your King and Bridegroom hides in the last and least of these, His brethren. Run to Him. The kingdom is at hand. You see, the King—Jesus—is your reward, and all things with Him. Run for Him, with Him, to Him, and in Him. May you no longer run in fear, but may the love of Christ compel you.

May this compel you: that on the night He was betrayed, the night before He was crucified, He took bread and broke it saying, "This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way after the supper, having given thanks He took the cup and said, "This is the cup of the new covenant in my blood, shed for the forgiveness of sins. Drink of it, all of you, in remembrance of me. I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

So if you want Jesus (and I believe that's close to what the Bible means by *faith*, and remember that Jesus is running in a different direction than most of this world), come to the table.

It's His body and blood. If you come, you're saying, "Jesus, I've lost, and you've won. Take me. I'm yours."

That's an interesting thought, because you are not the product of a violent, competitive, angry, relentless struggle of one organism over another. You're the product of a surrendered bride and the sacrificial love of the Groom. And you exist because before the foundation of the world, your good Father wrote your name in His book and would not leave you nor forsake you.

In Jesus' name, worship Him.

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Maybe you've been running along thinking to yourself, "Hey, I'm doing pretty good! I'm making it . . . have a house . . . a car . . . I deserve my family . . . I'm becoming a success . . . I'm doing pretty good at this religion thing too. I'm more humble than most of those guys." If that's the case, maybe this message is a warning. You're running into nothingness. Maybe you're a nobody. Maybe you need to turn around and run for Jesus. Where is He? Listen to the angels. You will find Him wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger. Run to Him.

Maybe you're running back, and you get to Bethlehem. You look around and say, "This place looks like a barn. Something's wrong here. I feel poor in spirit, meek, and in mourning. People are laughing at me, reviling me, and uttering all manner of evil against me." And the Lord says, "Yes. You're blessed. Look in the manger." And you see Him.

Maybe you're beginning to get it, and all at once someone puts *thorns* on your head. Take courage. The kingdom is at hand. And in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, you will see that's not a crown of shame. It's not only a crown of thorns, it is the crown of glory and love. He is making His home in you. You are a somebody. If that's the case, be encouraged! When the Evil One says, "You're a failure!" say, "Big deal. I know that. But Jesus makes me win." May you crush the Evil One this Christmas. In Jesus' name, amen.

Relevant Texts and Quotations (from bulletin)

The LORD said to Moses, “This shall be the law of the leper for the day of his cleansing. He shall be brought to the priest; and the priest shall go out of the camp, and the priest shall make an examination. Then, if the leprous disease is healed in the leper, the priest shall command them to take for him who is to be cleansed two living clean birds and cedarwood and scarlet stuff and hyssop; and the priest shall command them to kill one of the birds in an earthen vessel over running water. He shall take the living bird with the cedarwood and the scarlet stuff and the hyssop, and dip them and the living bird in the blood of the bird that was killed over the running water; and he shall sprinkle it seven times upon him who is to be cleansed of leprosy; then he shall pronounce him clean, and shall let the living bird go into the open field.”

-Leviticus 14:1-7

For through the Spirit, by faith, we wait for the hope of righteousness. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is of any avail, but faith working through love. . . . It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh that would compel you to be circumcised, and only in order that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. For even those who receive circumcision do not themselves keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may glory in your flesh. But far be it from me to glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation.

-Galatians 5:5-6, 6:12-15

I'm going to write a book someday and the title will be *I'm an Ass, You're an Ass*. That's the most liberating, wonderful thing in the world, when you openly admit you're an ass. It's wonderful. When people tell you, "You're wrong." I say, "What can you expect of an ass?" Disarmed, everybody has to be disarmed. In the final liberation, I'm an ass, you're an ass. Normally the way it goes, I press a button and you're up; I press another button and you're down. And you like that. How many people do you know who are unaffected by praise or blame? That isn't human, we say. Human means that you have to be a little monkey, so everybody can twist your tail, and you do whatever you *ought* to be doing. But is that human?

-Anthony DeMello, Writings

"Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever humbles himself like this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven."

-Matthew 18:3-4

Who determines what it means to be a success? This stupid society! The main preoccupation of society is to keep society sick! And the sooner you realize that, the better. Sick, every one of them. They are loony, they're crazy. You became president of the lunatic asylum and you're proud of it even though it means nothing. Being president of a corporation has nothing to do with being a success in life. Having a lot of money has nothing to do with being a success in life. . . . Having a good job or being famous or having a great reputation has absolutely nothing to do with happiness or success. Nothing! It is totally irrelevant. All he's really worried about is what his children will think about him, what the neighbors will think about him, what his wife will think

about him. He should have become famous. Our society and culture drill that into our heads day and night. People who made it! Made what?! Made asses of themselves. Because they drained all their energy getting something that was worthless. . . . Do you want to be happy? Uninterrupted happiness is uncaused. True happiness is uncaused. You cannot make me happy. You are not my happiness. You say to the awakened person, “Why are you happy?” and the awakened person replies, “Why not?” Happiness is our natural state. Happiness is the natural state of little children, to whom the kingdom belongs until they have been polluted and contaminated by the stupidity of society and culture.

-Anthony DeMello, Awareness

I have to try, but I do not have to succeed. Following Christ has nothing to do with success as the world sees success. It has to do with love. . . . The mistake is in thinking of the journey in terms of success at all (though inevitably we do). Success is one of the dirtiest temptations of the devil.

-Madeleine L'Engle, Walking on Water

But Jesus called them to him and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you; but whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave; even as the Son of man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

-Matthew 20:25-28

Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training.

They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever.

-I Corinthians 9:24-25

And they stripped him and put a scarlet robe upon him, and plaiting a crown of thorns they put it on his head, and put a reed in his right hand. And kneeling before him they mocked him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!"

-Matthew 27:28-29

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

-Hebrews 12:1-2

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"), that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. . . . Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, "And to seeds," as of many, but as of one, "And to your Seed," who is Christ. . . . But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. . . . For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's,

then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

-Galatians 3:13-14, 16, 22, 27-29

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