



Those Who Have Gone Before Us

By Derek Kiser on August 12, 2021

TODAY'S READING: Hebrews 12

I remember a moment in my initial training as an Army Chaplain. Knowing my grandfather and hundreds of thousands of soldiers had done what I was about to do, helped me keep going. To be honest, the gas chamber was intimidating, but at the end of an exhausting day, we went through what we called "Nick at Night." For me, that was worse. You climb out of a concrete bunker over top and crawl on your stomach across a field while machine gun fire is above your head and fake bombs are blowing up all around you. You then climb under barbed wire, all while wearing 50-60 lbs. of gear. The purpose, I am sure, is to help us to learn how to react during the real thing and not panic and lose it. My grandfather was part of the Greatest Generation and was drafted into the Army and served during World War II. I figured, if my grandfather and many before me could do it and live to tell stories about it, so could I.

When we look at Hebrews 12, we see that kind of motivation. Other people are, and were, examples to us of what faith looks like. We can do it through faith, but knowing others have gone before us, and are currently also living out their faith, is encouraging.

Sin, and the fighting of sin, are major discussions in this chapter. Verses 3-4 offer humbling comparison to Jesus and all that He endured for us. The end of verse 4 is particularly convicting, "In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood." Most of us have not fought sin to the point of shedding blood. We have not put in that much effort. When trying to live a life pleasing to God, we have the faithful witness of those in Hebrews 11, the many saints gone before us, and also the example of many around us. We can only fight sin through the power of the Holy Spirit, but knowing others are currently fighting sin victoriously and seeing their examples all around us and in the past is both encouraging and convicting. I am thankful for the Holy Spirit and His help daily to fight sin.

PRAYER: God, thank You for Jesus and His example, as well as many other believers around me who I see living lives that honor God. Help me fight sin and honor You in my life.

TOMORROW'S READING: Hebrews 13

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