

Week 1 - This is the Shoreline - Clear the Path

WARM UP - With every new year come new opportunities, new challenges, and the potential for God to move in new ways in our lives and within the life of The Shoreline. As you look back on 2018, what were some things that surprised you, and some things that you wish you had made a better effort in? As you look forward into 2019, what are some things you wish to grow in, personally, professionally, and spiritually?

This Sunday, Pastor Seth used the analogy of a road trip to describe our walk of faith with Jesus. There is a starting point, the moment we gave our life to Christ, and a destination, eternal life with Him. In the middle, there are a lot of things we go through. And on a family road trip, inevitably, two questions that always come from our kids. They are, "Are we there yet?" and "Where are we?"

- As believers, we know that we are not at our destination yet. Therefore, when you survey your faith, how would you answer the question, "Where are you?"
- And in the same way, we go through new levels of growth and maturity, on our way to our final, spiritual, destination. In looking at your faith, what is the next step in your spiritual growth that you would like to see God take you to in 2019?

READ Hebrews 12:1-2. In this section of Scripture, the author of Hebrews encourages us to continue steadfastly in the faith. As you read this section, what are some observations you have about the passage? Was there anything that stood out to you?

Our perseverance in the faith is motivated by the great men and women of faith who came before us. They observe our obedience, our behaviors, our words, and our faith as we follow Jesus with our lives. And it is for that reason, the author, encourages us to do 3 things in order to run the race of faith successfully.

1. **Throw off Sin** - the author encourages us to throw off the sin in our lives. Why is throwing off sin important when it comes to running the race of faith? Have you ever tried to simultaneously hold onto a particular sin, and faithfully follow Jesus? If yes, what happened? Sin is powerful, therefore, how can we "throw" it far from us?
2. **Throw off Distraction** - the author uses the word, "weight", in referring to distractions. These are things that aren't necessarily sinful, yet distract us from Jesus and the race of faith before us. What are some things in your life that bring distraction from Jesus? Are there things now that have the potential to become distractions from Jesus? What things have you done to help "throw off" the distraction in your life?
3. **Run with Endurance** - any endurance athlete will tell you, you don't roll out of bed with the endurance and stamina to run a marathon. It takes time, discipline, sacrifice, and routine to build the endurance needed to finish the race. It is the same when it comes to spiritual endurance. What sorts of things build endurance in your life? Why is endurance so important when it comes to your spiritual race? What happens if you don't have it? Have you ever experienced that?

WRAP UP - 2019 has great potential for personal growth, professional growth, and, most importantly, spiritual growth. To experience the growth that God has for you, and God wants to do in you, it will take a greater focus on Jesus. Therefore, what will need to change in your life to stay resolutely focused on Jesus in 2019? Spend some time praying for each other to accomplish that.