**The Race Called Life**

It is not where you start but where you finish.  None of us know or can remember when it started but God knows.  You did not volunteer for this race but you are in for life.  In life you either spend your time running from God or running to God but you will run this race.  On your mark, get set, go.

**The Start**

Psalms 139

1 O lord, thou hast searched me, and known me. 2 Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. 3 Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. 4 For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether. 5 Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. 6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it. 7 Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? 8 If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. 9 If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; 10 Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. 11 If I say, surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. 12 Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee. 13 For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. 14 I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. 15 My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. 16 Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them. 17 How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them! 18 If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee.  (We were God's dream before we became our parents' reality.)

**The Plan**

Acts 17:24/27 God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; 25 Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; 26 And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; 27 That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: 28 For in him we live, and move, and have our being;  (God decided there is one race with one blood.  He decided when we would live.  And he decided where we would live.)

Jeremiah 29:11/14 For I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. 12 Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. 13 You will seek me and find me; when you seek me with all your heart, 14 I will be found by you, says the LORD, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you. (When you understand and believe verse 11 then you will do verses 12/14

**The Path**

Proverbs 14:12 - There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.   (This is man's way.  My way or the highway mentality.  I did it my way)

Psalms 37:23 - The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way.  (This is God's way the real Highway Isaiah 35:8 - And a highway shall be there, and a way and it shall be called the way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.)

**The Journey**

Ecclesiastes 9:11 - I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, but time and chance happeneth to them all.

1 Corinthians 9:24 - Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain.  25Now they***(my way gang)*** do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we***(Christians)***an incorruptible. 26 I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: (There is purpose in our running the race but you must run it finish it with God to obtain the crown of life.)

Hebrews 12:1 - Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

1 Peter 4:3/4 - For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries: 4 Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you:  (We as Christians used to run with the world but not now.)

Philippians 3:10/14 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; 11 If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. 12 Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. 13 Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, 14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. (None of us have arrived yet.  We are not it.  So we run on toward our eternal destiny with Christ.)

**The Finish**

We know the race that Moses, Joseph and Job ran.  Didn't seem real fortuitous at the start but we know the ending.  Moses led the people out of Egypt, Joseph went from the prison to the palace and Job was restored twofold when he prayed for his friends.

Job 42:12 - So the LORD blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning.

Ecclesiastes 7:1&8 - A good name is better than precious ointment; and the day of death than the day of one's birth.  Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof:  (Remember it is not where you start but where you finish.)

Philippians 2:16 - Holding forth the word of life; **(THE BIBLE)** that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.

Matthew 10:22 - And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.  (The question that matters:  Are you saved?  Are you ready to meet Jesus?  That questioned turned my life around.  I had heard it physically with my ears hundreds of times but on November 2, 1976 I heard in spiritually in my heart.)

This is where we are today in the race. We are in the home stretch don't give up now.

2 Timothy 4:3/9 For the time is coming when people***(my way gang***) will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own likings, 4 and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander into myths. 5 As for you, **(Christians)** always be steady, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. 6 For I am already on the point of being sacrificed; the time of my departure has come. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing. 9 Do your best to come to me soon. (Notice Paul said he had done three things:)

I have fought a good fight.  You see the race of life is not easy. It is a fight.

I have finished the race.  Paul did not say he won the race, he said he finished.

I have kept the faith. He held on to the promise of God.

Paul was an overcomer.  We need to be faithful, fighters, finishers and overcomers,

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches;

The seven promises made to the seven churches in Revelation. (Seven is a sign of completion.)

Revelation 2:7 - To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

Revelation 2:11 - He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.

Revelation 2:17 - To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.

Revelation 2:26 - And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:

Revelation 3:5 - He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.

Revelation 3:12 - Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.Revelation

3:21 - To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

Revelation 21:7 - He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.

1 John 5:5 - Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?