

ONWARD IN CHRIST WITH TORCHES WELL LIT

I. [Matthew 5:13-16](#) [Hebrews 12:1-2](#)

A. [Matthew 5:13-16](#) (ESV) from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, propelling us into 2019: **13** *You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet.* **14** *You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden.* **15** *Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house.* **16** *In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.*

B. If you watched the Rose Bowl or any one of the more renowned bowl games, you saw packed stadiums with crowds cheering on their favorite teams. If you were a player on the field during such a game, you couldn't help but feel the energy and be inspired by the pandemonium of fans rooting for you to excel and be victorious.

C. [Hebrews 12:1-2](#) (ESV) follows Chapter 11, the Hall of Faith Chapter: **1** *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 endurance the race that is set before us,* **2** *looking to Jesus, (OV: **fixing our eyes on Jesus**) the founder 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.*

D. Every day life as a believer rarely feels like a national championship game. Though we really are surrounded by a great crowd of witnesses, we don't get to hear them. (*See me afterwards if you hear them!*) If you catch a touchdown pass in the Rose Bowl the crowd erupts, the band plays, the cheerleaders and mascots run wild. If you befriend a stranger, visit a dying friend, donate to Samaritan's Purse, or make a meal for a needy family, the response may be deeply appreciated but you probably won't hear some band playing a fight song. Such are the lives we believers are called to walk in daily. Listen again to [Micah 6:8](#) (NKJV): **8** *He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?*

E. There was a race run throughout Ancient Greece called the *Lampadephoria*. The contestants ran the race at night with all the runners bearing lit torches. However, the winner of this unique race was not the one who crossed the finish line first but rather the one who finished first with his torch still lit. My prayer for us is that we run our races in such a way that we cross the finish line with our torches blazing, that great cloud of witnesses cheering, our Father smiling--and all this to the honor and glory of His name!

F. Will heavenly rewards be handed out for our earthly deeds? The Bible says *yes*. Will they be better than tall glitzy trophies? Far better and eternally more satisfying. But are we called to live for the rewards to come or for the One who bestows not only rewards, but life itself, even life forevermore? We endeavor to be salt & light not for our glory but for His! We seek to obey from the heart not to earn what can't be earned but instead to joyfully obey with love and thanksgiving. [1 Timothy 1:17](#) (ESV) should loudly affirm our hearts: **17** *To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.*

G. Let the trophies and accolades come if they may but we will only amass them long enough to one day toss them at our Lord's nail-scarred feet. He saved us from God's wrath by absorbing God's wrath against us. He saved us from sin's curse by becoming the curse on the tree. He saved us from second death by granting us never-ending life in Christ. Why? Because He loves us! *The Bread & Cup remind us*. There are no *I*'s to dot in the word heaven but there will be plenty of space there to bow our knees, raise our hands, dance with joy, and sing with all our might to the One alone who'll be deserving! *And the Bread & Cup remind us*.

E. Our Communion song this morning is titled, "*For All that You Have Done*." It's by a wonderful Irish band named, *Rend Collective*. The familiar tune is an old Scottish folk-melody that was later applied to the Robert Burns poem, "*Auld Lang Syne*." As I read the lyrics to this song, let's allow them to take us to the Lord's Table. Let's also let them lead us anthem-like into our brand new year...

* Share the lyrics...

* Pray & Serve Communion...

* [Hebrews 13:20-21](#) (NIV) will take us into sweet fellowship as we journey onward in Christ our Lord and with our torches well lit: **20** *Now may the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep,* **21** *equip you with everything good for doing His will, and may He work in us what is pleasing to Him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

Scriptures, Videos, & Bonus Stuff

Matthew 5:13-16 (ESV) **13** “You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet. **14** “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. **15** Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. **16** In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

Hebrews 12:1-2 (ESV)

1 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 endurance the race that is set before us, **2** looking to Jesus, the founder 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.

Micah 6:8 (NKJV)

8 He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?

1 Timothy 1:17 (ESV)

17 To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

Hebrews 13:20-21 (NIV)

20 Now may the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, **21** equip you with everything good for doing His will, and may He work in us what is pleasing to Him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

For All That You Have Done **By Rend Collective**

Your grace will never be forgot,
Your Mercy all my life,
Will be my soul's forever song,
My story and my light.

From mountaintop to valley low,
Through laughter and through tears;
Surely the goodness of my God
Will follow all the years.

Chorus

For all that You have done for us,
For every battle won,
We'll raise a song to bless Your heart
For all that You have done.

You know our failures and regrets,
You've always led us home,
Redemption's arm has raised us up,
Our triumph in the storm. (Chorus)

(You're faithful through the ages!)

In unity we'll stand as one,
As family we'll go,
Shoulder to shoulder,
Hand in hand,
Into the great unknown. (Chorus)

Film Clips & Article Links

"For All That You Have Done" - Rend Collective
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z6TOAYZIPA>

"There Will Be A Day" - Jeremy & Adie Camp
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DHh58d9W4ZQ>

"I Need Thee O I Need Thee" - One A Capella
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T3wSbLa2uGg>

Three Idols in the Western Church - Tim Keller
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hGFUG1tzRAU>

Bonus Stuff

Ephesians 3:20,21 (ESV)

20 Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, **21** to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

Romans 15:13 (NIV)

13 May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

2 Corinthians 9:8 (ESV)

8 And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work.

Lampadephoria

There was a race run throughout Ancient Greece in honor of Prometheus; it was called the Lampadephoria or Lampadedromy or Lampadrome. The contestants typically ran the race at night with all bearing lit torches. However, the winner of this unique race was not the one who crossed the finish line first but rather the one who crossed the finish first with his torch still lit. My prayer for all of us is that we run our races in such a way that we cross the finish line with our torches blazing, that great cloud of witnesses cheering, our Father smiling--all for the glory of His name!