

## Lent and ENDURANCE

... let us **run with perseverance** the race marked out for us, **fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith.** For the joy set before him he **endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.** (Hebrews 12:1b-2)

In **Chicago**, south of the massive **Museum of Science and Industry** building along Lake Michigan, is a place called **Jackson Park**. This 600-acre oasis has a number of playing fields, a golf course, tennis courts, bike paths and three beaches. But it is poor soil, unsuitable for building the skyscrapers that tower throughout the city downtown to the north.

Only a few things **endure** in Jackson Park to remind a visitor that this was the location of the **1893 Columbian Exposition**, also known as **the Chicago World's Fair**. One of those things is **"The Republic,"** a 24-foot miniature statue of the 71-foot original created by Daniel Chester French. The other is the **Museum** building itself.

Nothing **endures** of that spring and summer in 1893, when **twenty-seven million people** (half the population of the US at that time) walked those grounds, saw the **displays**, the massive **60 foot columns**, the **200 foot building domes**, marveled at the **electric lights, fireworks, the thousands of classic statues, fountains, ships, and art** that filled this **White City** for more than a **square mile.** (see photo)



**Gone** are the **Agriculture Building**, the **Transportation Building**, the **Electricity Building**, the **Machinery Building**, the **Columbian Fountain**, the **Midway**, the first **Ferris Wheel** (264-feet tall with 36 cars that seated 30 people each). And hundreds of other buildings and displays. None of them **Endure**.

The **World's Fairs** of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were temporary **Disneylands**. The 'buildings' erected there were made of 'staff' plaster. They were stunning facades but not **enduring architecture**. **They**

were never intended to last. **They are gone.**

## Lessons for Lent

**By contrast, LENT is a time that teaches us about LIFE and Endurance.** The passage from Hebrews can provide helpful reminders for Lent:

- **To Focus on Jesus.** He ran his race of life. He "pioneered" and "perfected" his faith and showed the Way for ours. What we set our eyes on will determine our goals and attitudes as well.
- **To train for the race.** No athlete shows up without being fit, practiced, disciplined, ready to go.
- **To run with perseverance.** Starts are exciting. Reaching the finish, however, will require more than initial energy or casual interest. "Perseverance" means commitment, hard work, patience, and just plain "stickin' with it."
- **To endure the hard times.** Seldom do we ever achieve something difficult without finding resistance, opposition and even failure. (*Yet, we remember Edison for the light bulb, not the 1000 failures along his way.*)
- **To scorn the shame** – The hard times can make us feel **ashamed** of ourselves. Others people can **scorn** us along the way. Hebrews suggests that Jesus '**scorned the shame**'. What an interesting yet powerful twist!
- **To know who waits at the finish line.** Completion of our course, brings the recognition of the one who cheers us on and the one who awaits our completion, the one who reserves a place for us as prized family.

**Lent is a season** that reminds us of the **enduring Love of God**. "*Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever.*" 1 Chronicles 16:34.

**Psalm 136** has **26** verses. Each verse finishes with the same phrase repeated 26 times: "**for his love endures forever.**" *When you and I know what endures forever, we have a different focus, and we train differently. We persevere, endure, go on unashamed.*

As you get in **training for Lent** (perhaps giving up something, perhaps taking on something good, or perhaps doing both), remember this is about **LIFE with God** and things that last **forever**.

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**PS:** Remember who is smiling at the finish line.