**Wednesday 15th April**

Hebrews 12: 1-3

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, **2**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. **3**Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

I know that some of you are great runners! There are some who run marathons or half marathons, others who have used this time of isolation to do a ‘couch to 5K’ challenge! You are amazing! I am not a runner! Does anyone remember school cross-country races? Oh, if only I had been able to find a shortcut! But there was a real sense of satisfaction on finishing the race.

I’m not a runner, but I am in a race – a race in which there are no shortcuts. My encouragement to you today is to persevere – keep on keeping on! Perseverance is a crucial New Testament discipline. It recognises that there are many challenges on this cross-country race, and that perseverance will be necessary if you are to complete it. We need the right focus – somewhere to keep our eyes fixed – and that focus is Jesus. Don’t look to the left or to the right. Jesus is both our example and our goal. He is at the start line, he accompanies us en-route, cheering us on with heavenly cheerleaders, and he is our prize! He has gone before us – he knows the route. If we fix our eyes on Him, we can’t go wrong.

*Lord Jesus, thank you that you ran the race set before you, with all of the opposition and pain that you faced.*

*Thank you that you are our prize – that you are beyond compare in love, beauty and majesty. Lord we want to know you more. Help us to keep our eyes on you and give us the perseverance that we need to run our race in this challenging time.*

*Father we pray today for those who are struggling to make ends meet, to feed their families, and who are fearful of what the future holds. Lord, would you meet all their needs. We thank you for our local foodbanks – for the Wimborne Food Bank and the Bus Stop Club – and for the wonderful ways in which they are helping those most in need. Please bless and prosper their work. Thank you for the increased generosity the people are showing during this lockdown period. In Jesus name. Amen*

