

HEBREW S



Jesus preaching the "Sermon On The Mount"

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A STUDY IN PRACTICAL CHRISTOLOGY FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

The Study prepared by
L. M. Ancell , 2010 Australia

Cliff Young and Me.....oohh my aching feet

Cliff Young – the farmer who inspired a nation

“ The whole nation thought he was a crazy old man to undertake an almost impossible feat. Most feared that he would die trying. But this humble old man proved all the critics wrong.

Cliff Young, at 61 years of age, participated in 1983's Sydney to Melbourne race. Considered to be the world's toughest race, with the distance of 875 kilometers and took at least 6 to 7 days to finish, Cliff Young entered the race against world-class athletes.

The Beginning

Every year, Australia hosts an 875-kilometer endurance racing from Sydney to Melbourne – considered to be the world's longest and toughest ultra-marathon. It's a long, tough race that takes a week and normally participated by world-class athletes who train specially for the event. Backed by big names in sports like Nike, these athletes are mostly less than 30 years old men and women equipped with the most expensive sponsored training outfits and shoes.

In 1983, these top class runners were in for a surprise. On the day of the race, a guy named Cliff Young showed up. At first, no one cared about him since everybody thought he was there to watch the event. After all, he was 61 years old, showed up in overalls and galoshes over his work boots.

As Cliff walked up to the table to take his number, it became obvious to everybody he was going to run. He was going to join a group of 150 world-class athletes and run! During that time, these runners don't even know another surprising fact – his only trainer was his 81-year-old mother, Neville Wran.

Everybody thought that it was a crazy publicity stunt. But the press was curious, so as he took his number 64 and moved into the pack of runners in their special, expensive racing outfit, the camera focused on him and reporters started to ask: “Who are you and what are you doing?”

“I'm Cliff Young. I'm from a large ranch where we run sheep outside of Melbourne.” They said, “You're really going to run in this race?” “Yeah,” Cliff nodded. “Got any backers?” “No.” “Then you can't run.”

“Yeah I can.” Cliff said. “See, I grew up on a farm where we couldn't afford horses or four wheel drives, and the whole time I was growing up– until about four years ago when we finally made some money and got a four wheeler– whenever the storms would roll in, I'd have to go out and round up the sheep. We had 2,000 head, and we have 2,000 acres. Sometimes I would have to run those sheep for two or three days. It took a long time, but I'd catch them. I believe I can run this race; it's only two more days. Five days. I've run sheep for three.”

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When the marathon started, the pros left Cliff behind in his - gumboots. The crowds smiled because he didn't even run correctly. Instead of running, he appeared to run leisurely, shuffling like an amateur.

Now, the 61-year-old potato farmer from Beech Forest with no teeth had started the ultra-tough race with world-class athletes. All over Australia, people who watched the live telecast kept on praying that someone would stop this crazy old man from running because everyone believed he'll die even before even getting halfway across Sydney.

Turtle vs rabbits

Every professional athlete knew for certain that it took about 7 days to finish this race, and that in order to compete, you would need to run 18 hours and sleep 6 hours. The thing is, old Cliff Young did not know that!

When the morning news of the race was aired, people were in for another big surprise. Cliff was still in the race and had jogged all night down to a city called Mittagong.

Apparently, Cliff did not stop after the first day. Although he was still far behind the world-class athletes, he kept on running. He even had the time to wave to spectators who watched the event by the highways.

When he got to a town called Albury he was asked about his tactics for the rest of the race. He said he would run through to the finish, and he did. He kept running. Every night he got just a little bit closer to the leading pack. By the last night, he passed all of the world-class athletes. By the last day, he was way in front of them. Not only did he run the Melbourne to Sydney race at age 61, without dying; he won first place, breaking the race record by 9 hours and became a national hero! The nation fell in love with the 61-year-old potato farmer who came out of nowhere to defeat the world's best long distance runners.

He finished the 875-kilometre race in 5 days, 15 hours and 4 minutes. Not knowing that he was supposed to sleep during the race, he said when running throughout the race, he imagined that he was chasing sheep and trying to outrun a storm.

When Cliff was awarded the first prize of \$10,000, he said he did not know there was a prize and insisted that he had not entered for the money. He said, "There're five other runners still out there doing it tougher than me," and he gave them \$2,000 each. He did not keep a single cent for himself. That act endeared him to all of Australia. Cliff was a humble, average man, who undertook an extraordinary feat and became a national sensation

Opportunity and Faith / Faith and Opportunity

4:1 Therefore, let us fear lest, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you should seem to have come short of it.² For indeed **we have had good news preached to us**, just as they also; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard. 3 For we who have believed enter that rest, just as He has said," As I swore in My wrath, They shall not enter My rest," although His works were finished from the foundation of the world. 4 For He has thus said somewhere concerning the seventh day, "And God rested on the seventh day from all His works"; 5 and again in this passage, "They shall not enter My rest." 6 Since therefore it remains for some to enter it, and those who formerly had good news preached to them failed to enter because of disobedience, 7 He again fixes a certain day, "Today," saying through David after so long a time just as has been said before, "Today if you hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts." 8 For if Joshua had given them rest, He would not have spoken of another day after that. 9 There remains therefore a Sabbath rest for the people of God. 10 For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His.

11 Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall through following the same example of disobedience. 12 For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. 13 And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.

14 Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, **let us hold fast our confession.** 15 For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. 16 **Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need.**

I. The Value of Fear:

- A. One of the reasons that I have never been eaten by a tiger is that I have a very healthy respect of tigers and their teeth. I stay away. I stay away from everything that spells my name with a 's', a 'u', two 'p's', an 'e' and an 'r': supper!
- B. One of the reasons why I like pumpkin soup, is that I like the cook and she makes it for me. I do not go out and buy it for myself, but she makes it and it is good, and I fear the absence of that soup while loving the time in which that soup is shared.
- C. There is a great deal of difference between these two perspectives on fear. One is a recognition of evil, followed by a really bad outcome. And one is the acceptance of another's love thus fulfilling the moment of opportunity with action. There is a price to pay, and a reward to be received in both cases.
- D. One is a recognition of evil and a respect for that which I have heard and been taught by others who have brought to me the message, "Tigers bite. Don't go and play in the tiger cage!" One is a message that says, "come and lets sit down together in peace and harmony."
- E. The writer of Hebrews says that we have an opportunity, open right now, to come into the rest of the Lord. It is a bargain that we can not pass by.....like garage sales are for some people.
- F. **"Fear" is best understood as a physics term which means to resonate at a given frequency so that disharmony is obvious and so that noticeable harmony is achieved when proper intonation-resonation is achieved, such as when the strings on a guitar are tuned to resonate against one another in proper modulation, founded upon the primary note / point of orientation. To put it more simply, it is vibration control and organization of all things so that harmony is achieved. Biblically it is then putting my life in a position of harmony with God, through an search for an understanding of God and an acceptance of God as the ultimate and constant point to which we seek to tune our lives in all matters.**
- G. **POINT: An opportunity has been given to us to enter the "rest of the Lord". This is a rest that is here and available right now, as well as in the future.**
- H. Those who have heard, and have not done what was requested of them, will still get left out in the desert. You can count on that.
- I. **Maybe we may just need to go back and recheck to make sure we have the right 'Lord' in our sights and hearts.**

II. The “Rest Of The Lord” Part One

Remarks are connected to the first paragraph of the text.

- A. The Lord has made a provision for those who are ‘His people’, those who honour Him as Lord – Master – King. And one for those that set themselves up as the new king.
- B. I had a discussion with a man once who said that he believe that we can preach a more conservative doctrine than the bible and be just fine with God. That is an act of setting up a new king and God does not allow that to happen. He sends in His wrath to thrash things out. Ask the people at the Tower, back in Babel. Ask the graves out in the desert, the one whose shoes are still good. Ask the dead at Ai. Ask Moses. **Does God really mean what He says? Will He follow through?**
- C. The first requested response is then **“Do not harden your hearts”**
- D. How can we do that?
 - 1. By saying I’leave me alone right now and let me think about it. I will get back to you.’ It can sound nice and contemplative, but often it is nothing more that “Get lost. You bug me boyo.”
 - 2. By saying “I need more questions answered, give me more time”, when in reality it is nothing more than a put off.
 - 3. I do not really believe all that I have heard to be true. I am too sceptical. IT ALL SOUNDS TOO MUCH LIKE A MYTH AND A STORY TO ME.
 - 4. I don’t like things done this away so I will do my own thing.
- E. What do we need to do to ‘not harden our hearts’?
 - 1. Make sure that the Lord is The Lord and that self is not the Lord. In 99.99999% of all cases, that is the primary issue.
 - 2. Most have heard the good news out there to some degree, but they have allowed other voices to come in and to distract and dishevel them, to convince them of aberrant things, to listen to satanic voices. This is very serious.
 - 3. You can not listen to Rome and the words of some Caesar. You must listen to the Lord. Have only one ‘Master voice’. **Hurry to your knees !!!**
 - 4. There is a finish line coming. Stay the course.

II. The “Rest Of The Lord” Part Two

11 Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall through following the same example of disobedience. 12 For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. 13 And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.

- A. We hear a lot about the ‘rest of the Lord’ being ‘heaven. That is the ultimate place of eternal rest an fulfilment.
- B. BUT, there is a part of that rest to be experienced here in knowing that I stand with that which is guaranteed and true to God. [It does not mean that I can not slip and fall flat on my nose, but it does mean that God’s promises are in “the bag”-”done”-”fait accompli”. This side of things is seen in John 3:16 (PEB - Pain English Bible) when Jesus says that “those who commit themselves to Him will have eternal life.” It is not just a possibility, it is a fact.
- C. It requires, as the Hebrews writer says, “let us be diligent”. That is a constant tuning of our lives to His way – world – to His Son (holy fear). That maybe something that we of the restoration movement may struggle to accept, If we see the world from a perspective that says we have got it all figured out correctly; all work done.”
- D. This is why the very next passage calls us to the word, that which is sharper than any two edged sword.

It is at this point that I want you to remember Cliff Young’s mother’s advice. I will tell you about it in a second.

All too often, when we run, we hit a wall, a threshold of pain, and we stop. The sword is an instrument of offense and defence for those moments of survival.

[Two edging of a weapon does not mean have a blade with an edge on both the top and the bottom. It does mean that when sharpened the edge is ground from both sides to make what amounts to a serrated edge, thus cutting on the field of battle will last longer and inflict the deepest wound possible. In the American Civil War, this was called “rough sharpening a sword”. When once sharpened in this fashion, both the victim and the wielder need to be careful for the blade can and will cut them both, just like broken glass cuts everyone who has to handle it. Therefore all must be aware of the power of the word as it is given by God; Christian and Non-Christian.]

II. The “Rest Of The Lord” Part Two

14 Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, **let us hold fast our confession**. 15 For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. 16 **Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need.**

What more needs to be said?

THE END OF THE STORY: When Cliff Young was awarded the first prize of \$10,000, he said he did not know there was a prize and insisted that he had not entered for the money. He said, “There’re five other runners still out there doing it tougher than me,” and he gave them \$2,000 each. He did not keep a single cent for himself. That act endeared him to all of Australia. Cliff was a humble, average man, who undertook an extraordinary feat and became a national sensation

You may well ask, “How did 61 year old Cliff do it? You say that he ran in work boots, with out a team to assist him and he just never stopped ?!?! . How did he win? How did he do it?”

1. The “young Shuffle” was an ungainly looking gait that actually used ½ of the energy of all other running styles. Many long-long distant runners use it today and it has won the Sydney to Melbourne race some eight times!! (The most difficult marathon race of all.) He ran at his speed.
2. He never stopped to rest, he just kept on running, shuffling along constantly.
3. When he reached the threshold, he kept a picture in his head of chasing sheep and a storm a-comin’: “Gotta be done....gotta be done”.
4. His only training partner was his mother who kept on telling him “...just one more hill, Cliff, just one more hill. They are out there still.” He listened to his mother.

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Question for Sunday Morning Discussion

1. *What do you remember about Cliff Young's feat? Do you remember what you were doing when he won? How did you feel?*
2. How does Cliff Young's story assist you in understanding Hebrews 4? What is the writer's big picture point for the whole of this chapter?
3. What is your definition of fear?
4. What do you fear the most in this life? What really scares you? How do you use that fear positively?
5. Do you see a modern day need to preach the word to all of the world, even the neighbours across the street?
6. What happens if someone does not respond to the gospel message the first time I try to talk to them about it? How do I treat those that have not yet accepted the idea of Jesus, as God's Saving Son? What do I need to do next? Do I need to continue my friendship with them? (Remember Cliff Young)
7. What do I need to say when someone gives out a very good rebuttal to the elements of my faith? Where do I need to stand strong?
8. What can I do to prepare myself to give out better answers to critics? Do I have to have a Ph.D. in the study of apologetics to go out and serve? How much do I need to know?
9. What does the words of the song mean when it says that there "is a sure and strong retreat, tis found beneath the mercy seat." Does it speak of heaven or is there a mercy seat here? How does this speak to the idea of the Lord's rest for us"?