

***“Hardiness: The Spiritual Benefits of Adversity”***  
**by Rev. John C. Tittle**

**Scripture Reading: *Hebrews 12: 1-3* NRSVue**

<sup>1</sup> Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, <sup>2</sup> looking to Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God. <sup>3</sup> Consider him who endured such hostility against himself from sinners, so that you may not grow weary in your souls or lose heart.

1. Who do you think is included in the “great cloud of witnesses” and what is their purpose? How would they, or could they, motivate a living believer? Do you think that those who have died, and are now with the Lord, are able to view what is happening here and now? Why or why not?
2. What are some of the weights that we can cast off in our lives?
3. What does the author of Hebrews mean with these words: Let us run with perseverance the race that is set is before us.
4. What do you think the joy was that Jesus set before him? How might the hope of future joy help us endure present hardship?
5. Christ willingly went through so much for us and faithfully finished his race by his crucifixion and resurrection. How does considering Christ help us not grow weary in our souls or lose heart?
6. Psychological studies indicate that the fear of adversity increases the pain of it, but responding to adversity by embracing it, framing it as a challenge, and finding a sense of coherence or even purpose within it increases our hardiness. Does that seem counterintuitive? How might we cultivate more perseverance in our lives?