

FINISH THE RACE

Sermon preached for NBC Chapel 1/28/09

Scripture Reading: Acts 20: 22 – 36

TEXT:

Acts 20:24 (NIV)

²⁴ However, I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me--the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace.

Introduction: Our worship theme for chapel is 2 Timothy 4:7. We stated it together at the beginning of the service. It is the testimony of a good and faithful soldier of the cross; it is the expectancy of reaching the finish line by a disciplined and dedicated runner for the Lord. In similar fashion, he gives a similar testimony with courage and conviction as he tells the saints at Ephesus... no matter what the cost; I am headed for Jerusalem, for that is where the finish line is! You and I may not know where our finish line will be... but tonight, we can know that God will get us there!

I. A Bold Adventure With God

- The race we run is a race of faith that takes us on a bold adventure with God.
- Every race has a starting line and a finishing line... tonight we want to focus on how we FINISH the race... reaching the Finish Line

Illus: NASCAR racing: Believe in your car, your teams, your skills, know the track

Life is like a race track – it is not just a straight line from start to finish but it includes some challenging curves/turns

The track is the Kingdom – The Fuel is Faith – The Finish Line is “Well Done!”

We run the race with the intent to finish and hear our Master say, “Well done!”

- You must study the track – know the turns, believe in the One who has called you to equip you to adequately handle the twists and turns of the course.

II. Turn No. 1 – BELIEVE

- We must dare to believe and trust the God who has called us
- To truly believe God is to live by Faith for faith is belief in action
“Faith is believing God and acting accordingly”

Illus: Tight rope walker and the wheelbarrow

- We can live in the assurance that the God who called us will be with us to the end

III. Turn No. 2 – CHALLENGE

- We are challenged by the future – the unknown – the unexpected
- Faith does not have to know all the answers ahead of time, for faith trusts in the One who already knows!

Faith sees the Invisible and Accomplishes the Impossible

Faith rests on the Promises of God’s Word

Faith finds assurance in the power, might and ability of God

Faith spurs us to action!

IV. Turn No. 3 – ACTION

- Faith is an action word
I WILL BELIEVE EVEN WHEN I DO NOT SEE IT
I WILL OBEY EVEN IF I DO NOT TOTALLY UNDERSTAND IT
I WILL GIVE EVEN IF IT LOOKS LIKE I DON'T HAVE IT
I WILL PERSIST AND BE FAITHFUL EVEN WHEN I DO NOT FEEL LIKE IT
I WILL PRAISE GOD AND THANK HIM EVEN BEFORE HE ANSWERS ME BECAUSE I KNOW HE WILL KEEP HIS PROMISES TO ME
- There is an attitude that makes this kind of action possible:
A SET-BACK IS A SET-UP FOR A SUPERNATURAL HAPPENING!
WITH GOD OBSTACLES BECOME OPPORTUNITIES FOR HIS MIRACULOUS INTERVENTION

V. THE KEY TO REACHING THE FINISH LINE.... COMMITMENT

Listen to Paul's own description of what it means to focus on the finish line:

Philippians 3:12-15 (MSG)

¹² I'm not saying that I have this all together, that I have it made. But I am well on my way, reaching out for Christ, who has so wondrously reached out for me.

¹³ Friends, don't get me wrong: By no means do I count myself an expert in all of this, but I've got my eye on the goal, where God is beckoning us onward—to Jesus.

¹⁴ I'm off and running, and I'm not turning back.

¹⁵ So let's keep focused on that goal, those of us who want everything God has for us. If any of you have something else in mind, something less than total commitment, God will clear your blurred vision—you'll see it yet!

- **Faith does not just believe that God CAN, it is more that believing that He WILL, Faith believes that he is doing it right now!**
- **Faith to match the Mountain – move it or climb it**
- **Faith that anticipates the Finish – “Well Done!”**

CONCLUSION:

I WILL FINISH I AM IN HIS HANDS!

RESPONSE:

WHAT TURN ARE YOU ON IN YOUR RACE?

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO BELIEVE GOD FOR TODAY?

WHAT IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE YOU ARE FACING THIS VERY MOMENT?

WHAT ACTION WOULD GOD HAVE YOU TAKE RIGHT NOW IN THE FACE OF ALL OF THIS?

CAN YOU SEE THIS MOMENTARY SET-BACK AS A SET-UP FOR GOD'S MIRACULOUS INTERVENTION?

ARE YOU READY TO BELIEVE THAT GOD IS TAKING CARE OF THIS RIGHT NOW?

BENEDICTION: **Jude 1:24-25 (KJV)**

²⁴ Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present *you* faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy,

²⁵ To the only wise God our Saviour, *be* glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen