

Passage to Ponder

(1 Corinthians 9:24-27)

Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

If the Apostle Paul was interviewed by the Corinthian Sentinel and asked what the desire of his life was, he would probably say, "I want to win!" Win what? The race set before him. What was that race? Philippians 3:10-14 gives us some of its layout, Paul said that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Paul's desire was to know and to grow in Jesus and in the power of His resurrection. In other words Paul wanted to know all he could about Jesus and he wanted to do faithfully all that God had called Him to do. This was Paul's race.

Paul not only used a sports illustration to describe his desire in life, but he also used it to describe how he lived. Paul tells us that he lived dedicated, as a runner or a boxer would sacrifice foods, pleasures, time and energy for training to receive a perishable crown, Paul sacrificed His fleshly appetites, time and energy to prepare himself and others for eternity. Paul lived with purpose and vision, as a runner ran for the finish line and a boxer aimed to hit for the knock out, Paul lived to be changed to bring change.

Lastly as a runner or a boxer wanted to finish strong and not be disqualified for breaking rules, or not meeting requirements, Paul didn't want to be disqualified in his race. Paul wasn't worried about losing his salvation, but of losing his rewards. Paul's desire was to finish strong. We know from 2 Timothy 4:6-8 Paul finished his race strong, he said, For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness,

which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

Our application this morning is that God has given each of us a race to run. The length and dynamics of the race is for us to know Jesus and the power and His resurrection. We should live dedicated, purposed and faithful so that we can know Jesus and do all that He has called us to do. Lets continue to run the race, so that we might receive our reward and here the words, "Well done good and faithful servant."