

Pastor David's notes for 3/20-21/2010

Following Jesus

Finish Line Stretch

"My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work."

John 4:34

"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."

Acts 20:24

"For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing."

2 Timothy 4:6-8

"Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything."

James 1:4

"To him who overcomes and does my will to the end . . ."

Revelation 2:26a

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"Finish Line Stretch"

Following Jesus is a whole life journey moving toward a glorious and everlasting conclusion.

There are times of completion, both along the way and to the very end, that require us to go all out for the finish line. We will successfully cross these finish line markers on our journey of faith by:

1. pressing through our pain

2. keeping the finish line in sight

3. holding nothing in reserve

4. finishing with our heart out front

next weekend: Easter Series - "Two Sides of the Cross"



CONNECTION QUESTIONS

for personal study & individual reflection,
and small group discussion & comment

“Finish Line Stretch” - John 4:31-34; Acts 20:17-38; 2 Tim 4:1-8;
Revelation 2:7,11,17,26; 3:2,5,12,21

1. Once when the disciples were concerned about Jesus having enough to eat He said to them, “My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work” (John 4:34). For Jesus there was sustaining motivation and power in doing and completing what God had given Him to do, both in that moment and for the whole of His life. How can that kind of finish line focus be “food” for us? When have you had a sense that there is a job or task that God has given you to do, and you must extend yourself to finish it?

2. In any race that is more than a sprint, there is a moment of doubt and pain that makes those who run think they cannot possibly finish and should drop out well short of the finish line. These times of anguish and exhaustion in life must be met by a determination to take one more step toward the finish line. When have you been in such a place in your life? What helped or hindered you in taking one more step toward your goal?

3. One of the most transforming effects of following Jesus is how He impacts our view of what is truly important. Paul would say toward the end of his life that nothing was worth more to him than finishing the race and completing what Jesus had given him to do (Acts 20:24). Being able to see what is most important and prioritizing it as a goal is a critical skill in finishing the race well. When have you been fooled about what is most important? How would you define the goal of your race at this stage of your life?

4. In the letters to the seven churches in Revelation 2-3, Jesus says again and again that we must “overcome” in order to finish well. What are some of the things we must overcome? How does our faith and hope in Christ, and our awareness of His having gone before us on the way, help us to meet that challenge?

5. Runners who are trying their best always lean into the finish line when they cross it, putting their heart out front as they break the tape. Stretching towards life’s goal and God’s purpose for us is really a “heart out front” enterprise. In truth, the Bible says unless love is our motive and our goal, we are wasting our time and profit nothing (1 Cor 13:1-3). Is love moving and motivating you toward your goals in life? Can you fit your primary goals into Jesus’ charge that we learn to love God, our neighbor, and ourselves?
