

God's Great Adventure: Finishing Strong

Wylie United Methodist Church
Pastor Jeff Hatcher – June 7, 2009

Acts 20:16-24

16 Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus to avoid spending time in the province of Asia, for he was in a hurry to reach Jerusalem, if possible, by the day of Pentecost. 17 From Miletus, Paul sent to Ephesus for the elders of the church. 18 When they arrived, he said to them: "You know how I lived the whole time I was with you, from the first day I came into the province of Asia. 19 I served the Lord with great humility and with tears, although I was severely tested by the plots of the Jews. 20 You know that I have not hesitated to preach anything that would be helpful to you but have taught you publicly and from house to house. 21 I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that **they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus.** 22 "And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. 23 I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me. 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.**

Illustration: 1912 Summer Olympics in Stockholm Sweden
Japanese marathon runner Shizo Kanakuri

Are we like Kanakuri in our Christian walk?

Have we just dropped out because the race has gotten too long, too hard or we've just lost interest?

Has God declared you a missing person?

1. **GOD IS CALLING US TO "FINISH STRONG"**

2 Timothy 4:6-8

6 For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure. 7 I have **fought the good fight**, I have **finished the race**, I have **kept the faith**. 8 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.

YOU NEVER RETIRE FROM THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

(Positions Yes, Ministry No)

GOD HAS:

- People He wants you to Encourage
- People that only you (with your life Experience) can Reach on behalf of Jesus
- Battles for you to Fight
- Peoples Burdens for you to help Carry
- Situations that need your Wisdom

2. **THE HOLY SPIRIT (LIVING IN YOU) IS OUR POWER SOURCE**

Acts 1:8 "But **you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you...**"

Luke 24:49

I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you **have been clothed with power** from on high."

John 14:17

the **Spirit** of truth...lives **with you** and will be **in you**.

- Never gets Old
- Never gets Tired
- Never wears Out
- Never goes Off Duty "He keeps going and going and going"

3. **TWO THINGS ARE REQUIRED FROM GOD TO "FINISH THE RACE"**

Acts 20: 21

I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they **MUST turn to God in repentance** and **have faith** in our Lord Jesus.

WE MUST...

- Have Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ
- Turn to Him in Repentance

4. **IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO GET BACK IN THE RACE!**

Psalms 92:12-15

12 The righteous will flourish like a palm tree, they will grow like a cedar of Lebanon; 13 planted in the house of the LORD, they will flourish in the courts of our God. 14 **They will still bear fruit in old age**, they will **stay fresh and green**, 15 **proclaiming**, "The LORD is upright; he is my Rock, and there is no wickedness in him."

- You always have Gifts God wants to use
- You're never too Old!
- You've never Sinned too Much!
- You've never been Complacent too Long!

Philippians 3:13-14

One thing I do: **Forgetting what is behind** and **straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize** for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

3 F's:

- Forget your Past
- Follow Christ in your Future
- Focus on the Prize

Have you fallen out of the race? Is it your desire to "Finish Strong"?

Acts 20:24

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.**

On the cross Jesus said, "It is finished." His mission of atonement was complete.