

Get In The Game – Victory

HOCL

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Well, let's jump into our lesson today.

Whether you are, or not a football fan I thought to illustrate today's message I would just sum up how the game works for you all today.

- 2 Teams
- 1 Ball
- The object of the game is to get the ball in the end zone.
- As the teams are doing that, they will face constant opposition.
- They will struggle and fight, and push for the entire game because they have one focus
- Their focus is on winning and getting a victory!
- The only way that they can win is to get the ball in the endzone more times than their opponent.
- And if they do that, they will go home victorious!

Friends, today I want to talk about how we can go home victorious! You and I do not have to leave this place today in defeat! It does not matter what you are going through! It could be a physical condition, or emotional instability. You might be dealing with a relationship crisis, maybe even a financial setback. You might be struggling with a spiritual problem or some other life issue. Whatever it might be, I am telling you that you do not have to leave this place defeated!!!! You can leave here in victory today! And the great news is this.....every day can be a day of victory for you and for me!!!! [1 Corinthians 15:57](#) – “But thanks be to God! He gives us the **victory** through our Lord Jesus Christ”. No matter where you are at in your spiritual journey, I want you to know that you are in a good place today. God has each of us here for a reason! The greatest victory that you and I will have in our lifetime is when we've stepped over the line of faith and became a new creation when we accept Christ into your life.

God has already made victory possible! And what happens so often is this.....many of us fail to experience victory on a daily basis because we don't have the end-zone mindset! The majority of today's games will be played in between the 20 yard lines, but there will not be a team that wins without getting in the end-zone. Friends, the only way that we can experience victory is to move out of our comfort zones and into the end zones. We have to have an end-zone mindset if we are to experience victory!

Turn with me if you would to Acts 20:22-24

Paul is sharing his farewell address to the leaders in Ephesus/ the Ephesians elders and as we read through this passage, we can see how Paul lived with an end-zone mindset.

**Read Acts 20:22-24**

**Pray**

If we are going to live a life of victory, we have to have an end-zone mindset. And I thought tonight that I would just pull out a few thoughts from this passage that we might be able to apply to our lives so that we too can experience victory. Let me share with you 4 ways that we can experience victory!

**1. Be sensitive (to be aware of or responsive to) the leading of the Holy Spirit** – Paul writes a lot about the Holy Spirit and there are just over 100 references of “the Spirit” in Paul's writings. And he was incredibly sensitive to the leading and the power of the holy spirit as it operated in his life. Here in verse 22a – Paul writes, “And now compelled by the Spirit...”

Compelled means to be duty bound. Paul felt that he was obligated and required to do what the holy spirit was leading him to do. He was aware of and responsive to the leading of the holy spirit in his life. Friends, you and I need to be aware of and responsive to the leading of the Holy Spirit in our life!!! Paul writes quite a bit about the significance of holy spirit in our lives and I want to pull out a few examples for you today.

- **1<sup>st</sup> – We can have life and peace through the spirit.** Romans 8:5-6 - “**5**Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. **6**The mind of sinful man<sup>[a]</sup> is death, **but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace**; How many of you want to have life and peace in your life? Be sensitive to the Spirit!
- **2<sup>nd</sup> We are sanctified through the spirit** – Romans 15: 15-16 – “**15**I have written you quite boldly on some points, as if to remind you of them again, because of the grace God gave me **16**to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles with the priestly duty of proclaiming the gospel of God, so that the Gentiles might become an offering acceptable to God, **sanctified by the Holy Spirit.**
- **3<sup>rd</sup> We gain Wisdom from the spirit** – 1 Corinthians 2:12-13 - **12**We have not received the spirit of the world **but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand** what God has freely given us. **13**This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words.<sup>[a]</sup>
- **4<sup>th</sup> We are to keep in step with the Spirit** – Galatians 5:22-26 - **22**But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, **23**gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. **24**Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. **25**Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. **26**Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other. This fruit must be produced in our lives!!!

If we are going to experience victory and have an end-zone mindset, we have to be sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

We also have to

## **2. Surrender to God’s will**– 22b..... “I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there”

- Paul was saying in this verse, “It’s not about me! It’s not about my agenda. It’s not about my wants, needs, desires! It’s not about what recognition I may or may not get. Paul didn’t care about any of that stuff! Paul only cared about his surrendering to God’s will and fulfilling God’s agenda ! Those were his priorities.
- Friends, when we talk about surrendering to God’s will, we’re talking about not just throwing in the towel, but we’re talking about getting on our knees and raising our hands and saying, ‘God, I surrender!!!!!!!!!!!!!! When you and I surrender, it’s either everything or nothing! There is no such thing as a partial surrender!!!
- **III.** In 1896 Judson Van DeVenter penned these words about surrender. “All to Jesus, I surrender; All to Him I freely give; I will ever love and trust Him, In His presence daily live. I surrender all, I surrender all, All to Thee, my blessed Savior,I surrender all. All to Jesus I surrender; Humbly at His feet I bow, Worldly pleasures all forsaken; Take me, Jesus, take me now. All to Jesus, I surrender; Make me, Savior, wholly Thine; Let me feel the Holy Spirit, Truly know that Thou art mine. All to Jesus, I surrender; Lord, I give myself to Thee; Fill me with Thy love and power; Let Thy blessing fall on me. All to Jesus I surrender; Now I feel the sacred flame. O the joy of full salvation! Glory, glory, to His Name! I surrender all!!!

Surrendering is tough.....it’s tough because of what it involves! When you and I surrender fully to God’s will, it will involve.....

- **It will involve Difficulties** - In Vs. 23 – “I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me.” What happens so many times in your life and in my life is that when we see hardships coming, or when we’re in the middle of some challenging and difficult times, we tend to want to play the victim or run the other way!

- **III. A parable is told of a farmer who owned an old mule.** The mule fell into the farmer's well. The farmer heard the mule 'braying' -or- whatever mules do when they fall into wells. After carefully assessing the situation, the farmer sympathized with the mule, but decided that neither the mule nor the well was worth the trouble of saving. Instead, he called his neighbors together and told them what had happened ...and enlisted them to help haul dirt to bury the old mule in the well and put him out of his misery.

Initially, the old mule was hysterical! But as the farmer and his neighbors continued shoveling and the dirt hit his back ... a thought struck him. It suddenly dawned on him that every time a shovel load of dirt landed on his back ... HE SHOULD SHAKE IT OFF AND STEP UP! This is what he did, blow after blow.

"Shake it off and step up...shake it off and step up...shake it off and step up!" No matter how painful the blows, or how distressing the situation seemed the old mule fought against panic and just kept right on SHAKING IT OFF AND STEPPING UP!

It wasn't long before the old mule, battered and exhausted, stepped triumphantly up out of the well.

- Maybe we have to consider that maybe during those challenging times, God wants to do something incredible through our lives if we would just Shake it off and step up! Shake it off and step up!! Shake it off and step up!!!!
- The 2<sup>nd</sup> reason why surrendering is tough is because...
- **It will involve Death** – In Verse 24a – Paul writes, “I consider my life worth nothing to me!!!! Paul’s approach was this.....he wasn’t concerned whether he lived or not. He did not have to survive!!!! Paul says in Galatians 2:20 “I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live but Christ lives in me!!!” Surrendering will mean death to ourselves!!! If we do not die to ourselves, we will never fully surrender to God’s will.

Paul knew that in order for there to be victory, that he would have to surrender his will to God’s will!!!

Jesus said in Luke 9: 23-25: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it." If we were to have an open conversation today, a transparent conversation, and a time where we could just get real with each other, what would you need to surrender today? Maybe it’s a habit? Maybe it’s an attitude, maybe it’s a behavior? IT could be anything, and God is giving us an opportunity to come face to face with that thing that we need to surrender.

### The 3<sup>rd</sup> way we can experience victory is by

#### 3. Setting our eyes on the goal –

Now when Paul speaks about setting our eyes on the goal, he instructs us in 3 areas.

- BE VERY CLEAR ABOUT THE MAIN GOAL. - Phil. 3:8-9 -**“I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ** and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ-- the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith”.
- KEEP PRESSING TOWARD THAT GOAL. -Phil. 3:10, 12. “I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death. Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but **I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me”** **Philippians 3:14 - I press on toward the goal** to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.
- LET NOTHING KEEP YOU FROM REACHING THE GOAL. - Heb. 12:1-2 - “Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, **let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles,** and **let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus,** the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God”  
(Acts 20:24). “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.” (I Tim. 4:7-8). “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”

Paul had his eyes clearly set on the goal! It’s been said that “Life without goals is like a football game without an end-zone” and that’s true for you and I and we need to set our eyes on the goal if we are to experience victory!

**And finally, if we are going to experience victory, we need to**

**4. Share Christ with others** – I don’t want to spend a lot of time on this one because it should just be a part of who we are as Christians.....**24c – Paul says that his task** “is the task of testifying to the gospel of God’s grace”

Sharing Christ with others happens by both word and deed. If we were to read the rest of Paul’s farewell address we could find other examples of how he lived this out in his life.

- Vs. 18 – “you know **how I lived** the whole time I was with you....” Friends, is the way that you and I live a testimony and example for others to follow?
- Vs. 19 – **I served** with great humility and with tears. This verse 19 has struck me for some time now.....how often do we truly serve with humility and TEARS!? Can you imagine the transformation that would take place in our lives and in our church and in our community if we all served with great humility and with tears (for those who needed Christ!)
- Vs. 20- “**I have not hesitated to preach** anything to you...” This means that when he had an opportunity to share the gospel message with others, he did it without question!
- Vs. 21 – “**I have declared to both Jews and Greeks** that they need to repent and turn to God”
- Vs. 27 – “**I have not hesitated to proclaim** to you the whole will of God..”
- Vs 35 – “**In everything I did, I showed you** that by this kind of hard work, we must help the weak and remember that the Lord said it is more blessed to give than to receive.”

Paul was absolutely committed to sharing his faith with people he came in contact with. The joys and privileges that we have in sharing our faith will bring us victory as well.

Do you want to experience victory! You Can!!

Pray