

The Home Stretch

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[0:00] I just want to say thank you to those who have a part in anything that goes on around here. I don't take it for granted that this place does not happen by itself.

Are we on? Yeah. So, I just want to say thanks. You know, there's all kinds of things that go on. And, you know, I appreciate the song leading and, you know, the people that operate the equipment, turning this on, playing the piano, they clean the church, they clean the grounds, they buy the supplies, whatever.

Not going on. Not going on. I'm thankful as a part of this church for all you people that do something that I don't have to do. Amen. Amen. All right. Turn your Bibles, if you would, this morning to 1 Corinthians chapter 9.

1 Corinthians chapter 9. And Brother Wolski asked me to preach this morning and even warned everybody. I just thought to myself, that wasn't very smart. But I'm glad you came anyway.

Amen. 1 Corinthians chapter 9. Title of the message is The Homestretch. That's what you're on this morning.

[1:17] You're on The Homestretch. 1 Corinthians chapter 9. And I preached before. I preached a message before on It's All About God. I preached before on It's All About Israel.

And this morning, although I've titled it The Homestretch, it is all about the gospel. That's the point I want to make today. It is all about the gospel.

Now, you are on The Homestretch. Now, I don't know what you know about horse racing. Anybody know about horse racing? Anybody ever been involved with horse racing? You bet on the horses? You still do? All right. Don't do that. I went on a horse.

So, the whole... I don't want to tempt anybody today. You know, I worked with a guy. I worked with a guy. I didn't realize it, but he was addicted to horse racing. I never met nobody like that before. I didn't. You know, I know it goes on. But to actually work with a guy that, you know, I'm going to the Santa Anita this weekend, you know, and the next weekend, I'm going to Santa Anita. You go there every weekend?

[2:13] And you must spend a lot of money. You're addicted to horse racing, aren't you? So, I don't want to... You know, I talk about The Homestretch, you know. You know The Homestretch is the most exciting part of the race?

This should be the most exciting part of the race this morning. You are on The Homestretch. But, you know, my point I want to make today, it all being about the gospel.

So, I want to try not to get sidetracked too much. But, turn in your Bibles, if you will. I know you're hopefully already there. 1 Corinthians chapter 9. 1 Corinthians chapter 9, I want to read a little bit. But, I want to start with one verse here. In 1 Corinthians chapter 9 and verse 12, it says, If others be partakers of this power over you, are not we rather?

Nevertheless, we have not used this power, but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ. Now, I don't have time to read the whole passage, the whole chapter this morning, but Paul starts out in the chapter talking about his authority.

[3:16] His authority as an apostle and how he has this authority. And he does. But, he has the authority because he's trying to preach the gospel.

You know, I kind of related to that a little this week. And you can all probably relate to it in your own way. But, I was thinking about my job. And I don't want to start preaching about my job. I don't want to talk about my job.

I like talking about my job. But, I know this preacher. That's all he does. Every time we get there, we talk about his job all the time. That's not what I want to do. But, I did relate to the fact that I work for a company.

And everything I do in that company is for the sake of that company. Now, you may be able to relate to that somehow. I don't know. But, I can relate to what Paul is saying.

Paul has got authority as an apostle. That's what the chapter is talking about if you read in the beginning there. But, he has his authority over them. He has some power. He has, because he's an apostle. But, it's all about the gospel.

[4:15] It's all about the gospel. It is for the gospel's sake. And, you are on the home stretch this morning.

You are on the most exciting part of the race. I ask you this morning. Is it all about the gospel? It needs to be. It needs to be.

Verse 19. Verse 19. Going down to verse 19 in chapter 9 there. And, Paul says, For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more.

So, Paul. Paul, he's got this power over them. He's got this authority over them. But, he's become a servant because the gospel. That I might gain them.

Paul is trying to gain the lost. And, if I could make the point this morning. If I could get you to see the point this morning. That you are on the home stretch.

[5:18] And, it needs to be for the gospel's sake. That we may gain them. That we may gain them more. Servant. Become a servant.

He made himself a servant. For the gospel's sake. Look at verses 20. After 23. It says, And unto the Jews, I became as a Jew.

That I might gain the Jews. To them that are under the law. As under the law. That I might gain them that are under the law. To them that are without law. As without law. Being not without law to God.

But, under the law to Christ. Notice that's in parentheses. Felt like it needed to be there. And, God knew it needed to be there. That I might gain them that are without law. To the weak.

Became I as weak. That I might gain the weak. I am made all things to all men. That I might by all means save some. And, this I do for the gospel's sake. That I might be partaker thereof with you.

[6:14] Now, this passage here. Is probably one passage. That a lot of people have used. As an excuse to be a flesh bag. They've used it as an excuse. To do their worldly things.

All in the name of the gospel. Supposedly. You know, I think about. I think about Paul. And, you know, Paul. In Romans 7. He talks about his failings.

You know, those things I would. I do not. The things that I wouldn't do. Those are the things I do. But, I say tongue in cheek. That Paul's failings.

Are like our holiness. Don't look at Paul. When he talks about his failings. And, try to relate to it. As what we're doing. Probably not the case.

Paul's failings. Are probably. Liking more to. What we would consider. Our holiness. You follow? They've used this passage.

[7:11] As an excuse. To fall deep into sin. And promote others to do so. That's messed up. That's messed up.

When they say. I've become to all men. That I might save some. I go to this. I hang out with these guys. And do their thing. I'm trying to win them.

Oh. Is that what it is? Is that what that is? In verses 20 through 23.

Paul is talking about. Ministering to everyone. Relating the best he can. To everyone. Going to where they are. For everyone. Going down the road of right.

To reach them. With the gospel. He says to the Jew. As under the law. Right? He says those without the law. As without the law. But he's real. Real. He's real careful.

[8:10] To. Clarify. Not without law to God. Not without law to God. And then he says. To the weak. I became as weak. That's it.

He didn't say. I go to the bar. To hang out with them at the bar. So I can become like them. That I might win them. He didn't say that. He said three things here. To the Jew.

I became as a Jew. I go under the law. For their sake. To the Gentile. I. Don't go under the law. For their sake. To the weak. I become as weak.

For their sake. That's it. Those three. That all. And everything else. People want to use. To. Justify. Their sinful condition.

You are on the home stretch. This morning. Take advantage of it. It's the most exciting part. Of the race. The purpose.

[9:05] The purpose. Should be. For the gospel's sake. That somebody. Would get saved. The first point. I want to make this morning. Is you are on the home stretch. It is all about the gospel.

Are you proclaiming. The gospel. How are you doing that? Can you see it?

Can they see it? What does it look like? So let's go through that real quick. Are you proclaiming the gospel?

How are you doing that? Can they see it? Answer these questions to yourself. What does it look like? What does it look like?

So if you get to that place. Where. You got to answer. And say. What does it look like? And you don't see anything in there. What it looks like you're doing. You may not be. You may not be.

[10:10] It has to have gospel markings on it. If it's got to do with the gospel. Like.

If you're. Giving out blankets. And you're feeding some of the poor. And you're giving them a buck. In itself. That doesn't have gospel markings.

You can send them to hell. With a blanket and a buck. And some food. It's got to have gospel markings on it.

And you learn that in the scripture. Verse 24. Paul picks up. Going down the home stretch. With. Know ye not. That they which run in a race. Run all.

But one receiveth the prize. So run that you may obtain. So Paul says. Know ye not. That they which run in a race. Run all.

[11:06] But one receiveth the prize. Paul is asking you a question. I'm going to reiterate that question. This morning. Do you know. You're in a race.

Do you know. Paul. Paul talking about his authority. In the passage. And Paul. Talking about it being for the gospel sake. He says. Hey. Do you know. You're in a race.

Do you know it. How about you this morning. Do you know. You thought much about it. You're in a race. Do you know it. The first thing.

It's for the gospel sake. The second thing. It is a race. You're in. You are in a race. Do you know it. He says. That they which run in a race.

Run all. Know ye not. That they which run in a race. Run all. Do you know that. They run all. But one receiver the prize.

[12:03] So run that you may obtain. Go. After the prize. God. Wants you to get it. Now.

So it says. One receiver the prize. What does that mean. Look. You're in your own little race. You and me. Are not in competition. I thought about that Old Testament.

That Old Testament example. With the. With the guy that has to give tidings. You know. I think it's Saul and the sons die. I don't remember. Maybe it's not. Maybe it's Absalom.

I think it's Absalom. But. The guy's ready to get. Ready to go. Bring the tidings. She's a runner. And he goes. But. But it's not good tidings. So they tell him. The step aside.

They need the other guy to do it. I guess one sends good ones. One sends bad ones. So this guy's like. Oh man. And so the guy that gets the other tidings. He runs. Boom. He runs out.

[12:55] And they go. Hey. I see somebody coming. And this other guy. He wants to run. Can I just run anyway? But you don't have any good tidings to bring. Yeah.

But I want to run. Go ahead. And he takes off. And they see. Hey. There's a second runner. And it's like the runner of. Running of. What's that guy's name? Remember. Who knows anybody?

The running of. I don't know. Okay. So. He runs. And he gets there first. He gets there first. He's fast. But they weren't racing.

Right? The guy. The second guy that was running. Could care less about the first guy running. He just wanted to run. They weren't even related.

He probably wasn't buzzing right by that guy. But it had nothing to do with any. It had nothing to do with each other. That's the way your race is this morning. You are running.

[13:59] Your own race. It's kind of like if you were trying to make best time. Best time. You know. In a run. You know. Nobody else would even have to be there. You could do it all by yourself.

And just turn it in. Because you're running a race. But you're running your own race. The prize is yours.

There's a prize for every one of you. Every one of us can get the prize. God wants us. God wants us to have the prize.

The lesson this morning is you're on the homestretch. All before you thought they were. All Christianity before you.

Thought they were on the homestretch. And they were. In their own race. Right? Every one of them. Is going after a prize. God wants you to get the prize.

[15:05] It says. Paul says. Run all. Not some. Walk some. Stop somewhere for a break. But run. Amen. Verse 25. Verse 25 says.

And every man. That striveth for the mastery. Is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown. But we an incorruptible crown. We an incorruptible.

Paul says. Everyone that strives for mastery. Is temperate. In all things. The third thing. Is. You need to be temperate. You need to be temperate.

Now. If you have a. You know. Temperance. Temperance is one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit. Galatians chapter 5. If you got a Bible that says self-control. You got the wrong wording. You say. How do you know that? Well. It says the fruits of the Spirit. Not the fruits of self. They're diametrically opposed to each other. Right?

[16:01] The last thing you need. Is more of self. You got enough of that. You need. The fruit of the Spirit. You need temperance. What is temperance? Temperance is. To strengthen something.

Right? Not to temperate. You don't need to be. Tempered. In the flesh. You need to be tempered. In the Spirit. You don't need self-control.

You need temperance. Temperance. Temperance.

If you're going to compete. Compete. With athletes. You better be tempered in all things. Now I understand. There's exceptions that prove the rule. Right? There's exceptions out there.

You know. A couple names came to my mind. Because I've heard some different things. Hussein Bolt. Right? Hussein Bolt. He's just a big guy. He's a fast runner. And they say that. I don't know what it is. It may be the 100 drive.

[16:58] 300. I don't know what it is. But they said he. The average person takes 40 strides. 45 strides. He takes 40. Take four of those. Five of those strides.

And that's the kind of lead he kind of gets. You know. Mike Phelps. And I don't know a lot about these guys. But I've heard before that he had a body for it. You know.

That's okay. You know. If you're going to compete though. You're probably going to have to be tempered in all things. Or you're probably wasting your time. Competing with athletes like that. What's he say? He says. Verse 25.

And every man that striveth for the mastery. That's what we're supposed to be striving for. The mastery. We're down the home stretch. We should be striving for the mastery.

[17:58] We're not talking about. We're not talking about something where you're crawling to the finish line. Oh. I hope I make it. Oh. I made it to the finish line. Right here.

It isn't like that. That isn't what it's like. Look at 2 Timothy chapter 4. 2 Timothy chapter 4. 2 Timothy chapter 4.

Paul's wrapping it up. He's down the home stretch. He's done. And verse 5. Starting verse 5. He said. But watch thou in all things. Endure affliction. Do the work of an evangelist.

Make full proof of thy ministry. For I am now ready to be offered. And the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight. I have finished my course. I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness.

Which the Lord the righteous judge shall give me at that day. And not to me only. But unto all them also. Thy love is appearance. Does that sound like somebody who's crawling to the finish line. [19:03] Hoping they're going to make it? No. That's a guy who under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. Told you how to finish your course. And did it by example.

Heading down the home stretch. I want you to see something else this morning. In 1 Corinthians chapter 9. 1 Corinthians chapter 9.

He says in verse 24. Know you not that they which run in a race. Run all. But one receiveth the prize. So run. That you may obtain.

God wants you. To obtain the prize. There is a prize to win. And God wants you to have it. Are you going after it?

Are you going after it? There's a crown. Verse 25.

[20:12] Paul goes on and says. And every man that strived for the master is tempered in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown. But we an incorruptible. We do it to obtain a incorruptible crown.

I don't know what kind of race you're in this morning. But you're in one. You're in a race. But are you trying to get the incorruptible crown? Or is it a corruptible crown?

Paul talks about this race. And he talks about obtaining this prize. As if. As if that. This crown is a prize. It is.

It is. And you know what? When you get to heaven. You're going to be. You're going to want to be walking around with one on. You're going to wish you had one on.

Get one. They're there to get. So. God talks about the crowns to win. And you're going to want to be walking around with one.

[21:13] When you get there. But many. Many. Many Christians. Many Christians are running the race to obtain a corruptible crown.

Not an incorruptible. You may see that you're on the home stretch this morning. You may already know that. You may see that. But what race are you running?

Is it just a race of living in the mortal body? Or is it the race. Of working for the night is coming when no man can work? Look at Hebrews chapter 12.

Hebrews chapter 12. Hebrews chapter 12. Hebrews chapter 12. Hebrews chapter 12. Hebrews chapter 12. Hebrews chapter 12.

Hebrews chapter 12. Hebrews chapter 12. Hebrews chapter 12. Hebrews chapter 12. Hebrews chapter 12. Hebrews chapter 12. It says. Wherefore seeing. We also are compassed about. With so great a cloud of witnesses. Let us lay aside every weight. And the sin which does so easily beset us. And let us run.

[22:19] Let us run with patience. The race. That is set before us. And Paul. In the previous chapter. Was talking about. The people in the past.

That have already ran this race. They all run in a race. They were all on the home stretch. This is not a race that. This is kind of like. It's kind of like. I tried to.

Try to see what it was like. It's kind of like a treadmill. Kind of like. If you got on a treadmill. With a screen on it. Okay. And you're running down a track. You're just running. You're just running. But at some given point.

The finish line is going to come up. And you finished. That's the way everybody's been running. Since Abel. Right. Hebrews chapter 11. If you're familiar with it. He talks about. Starts in there with Abel.

Abel offered sacrifices. That were good. Except from God. They're all running the race. Are you running a race this morning? You're on the home stretch.

[23:18] You're on the home stretch. It is the most exciting. Part of the race. Are you excited? If you're not running the race this morning.

Something's wrong. Amen. And you got to look at yourself. You got to. You got to. Maybe. Maybe you should try talking to yourself. Like we. Like we talked about this morning. Talk to yourself.

You're already doing it right now.

Verse 26. First Corinthians 9. 26. You know.

I'm not trying to teach you anything new. When I tell you. When I tell you about talking to yourself.

You know. I don't know if everybody does it. But as I get older. I just tell myself. You know what.

Just say it. Just say it.

You know it's right. You know it's in the scripture. Just go ahead and say it. Don't worry about whether they believe it or not. Don't worry about what they think. Verse 26.

[24:32] 9 verse 26. It says. I therefore so run. Not as uncertainly. So fight I. Not as one that be to the air. But I keep unto my body. And bring it into subjection.

Lest not by any means. When I have preached to others. I myself should be a cast away. You know. This is a guy that's running the race. And he's running strong. And he wants to win. I think about. You know.

The world's philosophy right now. Is everybody gets a prize. Everybody wins a trophy. That's not the Bible. That's not the Bible. You need to strive.

For the mastery. Be temperate in all things. Run the race. And obtain the prize. If you don't. You get nothing. I'm sorry. That's just the way it is.

And it'd be real good. If they learn that. Because they're going to come up. In the Christianity. Thinking. Oh no. No. No. No. I should get a prize. No. It doesn't work like that. It doesn't work like that.

[25:31] Paul says. I run not as uncertainly. I am running with purpose.

I am running on purpose. Now I understand. I understand Paul. You know. He got in on the third heaven. I understand all that. And.

And. What is it. What is it. That you see by faith. What is it you see by faith. Bible says.

Many will fall away. And they're going to lose sight. Of the end goal. Where are you at this morning. Are you in the race. Are you running. Which. Certainly. You know.

This is. This is preaching. This is designed. For response. That's what preaching is. Preaching is designed. For you. To.

[26:39] Think about what was said. Search inside. And do something about it. That's what this hour is. Last hour is just teaching. Right.

That's all it was. But not. Not this time. Our response should be. Not as the world's response. The world's response is.

Don't shove that down my throat. I don't want to hear it. Nobody else does. I saw that the other day.

On some. Somebody showed me that the other day. Somebody bashing.

Bashing. Bashing Christianity. They love to do that. I guess. I don't know. I don't follow all that junk. But somebody was trying to bash Christianity. On their thing. You know. Some loser. I say loser.

Because it's very unfortunate. They're going to lose.

They're on the wrong side. And they just don't know it. But they were talking about. You know. Stop.

Shuffling everything down our throat. We don't want to hear it. And. You know. Nobody else does.

[27:34] The Hindus don't do it. The Muslims don't do it. They've got nothing to tell you. Duh. You're on the same boat. You know.

That's not what this is. It's just us here. You know. Like I talked about in Sunday school. Be a Christian. This is what we do.

The Bible says. Preach the word. Be instant in season. Out of season. Reprove. Rebuke. Exhort. With all long suffering and doctrine. That's what it is. You.

During preaching. You ought to be able to. Draw from it. And one way or the other. It ought to. It ought to cause. Some kind of response. Cause some kind of response.

Three types of people here this morning. Probably. There's probably three types of people here. Maybe. Maybe you're lost. Maybe you're lost. Point number one would be for you. That has to do with. Everything's about the gospel.

[28:37] If you're here this morning. You've never been born again. You don't have a spiritual birthday. Think about your birthday right now. When was your birthday? When were you born? Boom. When was your spiritual birthday?

If you can't point to one of those. You might not be saved. You might not have the new birth. You may not be born again. That's the first thing you need. That is for the gospel's sake.

That's what the gospel is. The good news. The good news of salvation. So if you're here this morning. And you've never been born again. You're not sure. Come see me after. I'll tell you all about it.

Maybe you're one that's here this morning. And you're born again. But your life is not. For the gospel's sake. That's another type of person we might have here.

Is your life is not. For the gospel's sake. You're running the wrong race. You're in a race. You know you're in a race. Because you just run all day long. Always running. Man I'm worn out. We're just running the wrong race.

[29:39] You're just running the wrong race. Trying to survive. Trying to get ahead. Running what the world calls the rat race.

Maybe you're here this morning. You're in the gospel race. You understand. The ministry of reconciliation. You understand that. It's all about the gospel. You understand.

That. It's for the gospel's sake. You understand that. You're running that race. You look at it. When we talk about. What does it look like. You look. And you see yourself.

You see yourself passing out tracks. You see yourself praying for the lost. You see yourself. Talking in conversation. To somebody about the gospel. You see that. Maybe you're in that today.

You're in that race. You know. Maybe. You're in the race. You just. You just need to step it up a notch. Maybe. Maybe you need to. You need to.

[30:36] Step it up more than just a notch. Maybe. You're. You're running it man. You're running it. When you cross that finish line. You're going to be running across the finish line. Hey.

Praise the Lord. I. I. I encourage you this morning. Continue on that. You know. It was like. It's like when my kids used to run track. Or they.

Or they would be kicking a soccer ball into a goal. I'd be going. Go. Go. Go. Go. Go. And I've said it. That was. That was man. I just get real excited about it.

That's what I. That's what I. I. I say to you today. If you're in the gospel race. And you're. You're. You're in there for the gospel sake. Go. Go. Go. There's a prize.

There's a prize. And God wants you to get it. There's a crown to win. And God wants you to be wearing it up in heaven. You're on the homestretch.

[31:42] It is the most exciting part of the race. Let's pray. Father this morning. As we talk about the homestretch.

And Paul here. Exhorting us in the race that we're running. For the gospel sake. To run it with all. Striving for mastery. Being temperate in all things.

Help us to. Get excited about that. Help us to stay excited about that. It is. Our very Christianity. I love you Lord this morning. Thankful. Very thankful. To have become a Christian. Bless thy people. In Jesus name.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.