

12 August 2012

Reading: 1 Corinthians 9:24-27 (NT page 1150)

Sermon

The text verse for the sermon is verse 26: "Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air."

Our reading really struck a chord with me in the sense that we as Christian can talk so "aimlessly" about our true destiny which is the kingdom of God. And this really leads to a attitude of being laid back about everything concerning faith. I do not mean that everyone in this church must suddenly start to study to be ministers or deacons or become missionaries. I mean that we start to take our faith seriously and really focus on our true destiny which is the kingdom of God.

If we have the focus and we have the right attitude we will most certainly reach the finish line.

It reminded me of a woman I knew in South Africa who told me about her incredible journey of faith, hope and love and how her focus made her achieve wonders.

She was married and they had a son. After his birth it was soon clear something was wrong and after intense consultations the doctors did not have any hope for him to ever talk or walk. She refused to give up hope. Even after her husband has left her, she carried on focusing on what was needed. She got him on several therapies while everyone was telling her that she is wasting her time. But his speech did improve and later he even managed to sit straight in a wheelchair. Although he still could not walk, she carried on taking him to the best physiotherapists she could find.

One day her father in law said to her that nothing will really help to get him walking. She must just accept it. He was so sure of himself that he apparently said to her: You know I do not believe in God or bother going to church. If he starts walking, that is the day I will believe there is a God". She persevered. Two years later when he was 6, they were watching a program on "tellie". All of a sudden she noticed that he was trying to get out of the wheelchair on his own. Then he put one foot in front of the other and walked only one step

to fall back into the wheelchair. She did not make much of it. But the next evening he was doing it again and this time he walked three steps. She could not believe her eyes. So by the end of the week he was walking, albeit very slowly holding on to the wall or furniture. She then called her father in law telling him the great news. He came over and after witnessing this incredible miracle, he said: Now I believe in God and I will join the church”.

Her perseverance, her faith, hope and love and her focus helped her to continue her incredible race and in the end it also lead someone else to God.

We can all learn a lesson from this because it is like Paul said in his letter to the Corinthians: No-one runs in a race aimlessly, without proper focus and commitment to reach the finish line. If we have faith in God we need to show it in the way we run. We must be determined in everything we do, say and think that we will indeed reach the finish line where God will await us all. We cannot give up – not for one second. We must run in the hope that the race of faith is

not the Olympics where there is only one winner. Everyone that has faith in the Triune God, and who runs in his Name to the finish line will inherit his kingdom that was not made by human hands.

In order for us to run energetically we need to train and keep to our training schedule. We need to read the Bible each and every day, we need to speak to God as often as possible, we need to get involved with the life of the church, we need to sacrifice our time and money to help others, we need to talk to others about our faith, and we need to ask others to pray for us when we are feeling weary, and alone, when illness makes us to suffer, when our lives fall apart, when we need someone to hold our hands.

We need to look like people who knows their true destiny. We have to show the world through our deeds of love that we have faith in God. The world needs to hear our words of hope in the everlasting kingdom of God so that they too can come to faith. The world needs to see our certainty that we are indeed going to reach the finish line

– no matter what.

May we all who attend the Holiday club be mindful of this certainty when we work with one another and the children in our care. May we indeed run through the week with joy, celebration and a living hope towards Friday evening where we can also show and tell the parents about this certainty. It may just be that it is the ONE thing they have been searching all their lives...

Calum and Elizabeth today is in many ways the beginning of the race of faith for Arran. You have been running in this race for a long time. It is now time that you teach, show and tell Arran how to run in this race so that he too can reach the finish line in the arms of God through faith alone. May the Lord bless all your words and actions when you help Arran to run in the race of faith. Maybe your dedication and commitment to show Arran how to run the race, would also lead others to have faith in God.

Amen