

GO FOR THE GOLD! | Philippians 3:10-21

1. Introduction.

- a. Image: R. Leslie just ran The Taniwha marathon. He wrote a poem about it.
- b. Need: The Christian life is a marathon. Its easy to get discouraged. Sometimes we just want to give up.
- c. Subject: Running the Christian Life to Win the Prize
- d. Text: Philippians 2:10-21
- e. Outline: (1) Course Map; (2) Finish Line; and (3) Gold Medal.
- f. Read: Philippians 2:10-21.

2. Course Map.

- a. At the moment of faith in Jesus, every believer is enrolled in a marathon. This is a phase two race, with phase one assumed (see *Three Phases of Salvation*). As Paul says:
 - (1) We are the circumcision (v. 3).
 - (2) We have an imputed righteousness that depends on faith (v. 9).
 - (3) Jesus has made us his own (v. 12).
 - (4) Our citizenship is in heaven (v. 20).
- b. The race course has been set up by Jesus and already run by him (2:6-8).
 - (1) The same course was run by Paul, Timothy (2:22), and Epaphroditus (2:25, 30).
 - (2) Paul urges on the Philippians as they run the same course (3:17; 4:9).
 - (3) Now we're running the course.
- c. Every believer is provided access to the course map, the Bible. The map clearly shows the race involves suffering and even death (v. 10)(i.e., The Taniwha elevation gain map).
 - (1) Jesus' course involved suffering and death (2:8).
 - (2) Paul's course involved suffering and death (3:10).
 - (3) The Philippians' course involved suffering (1:29-30).
 - (4) Our course, too, involves suffering and possibly death (Jas 1:2-4).
- d. Paul is a coach providing mindset advice to the Philippians (and to us).
 - (1) In ch. 2, we see the race mindset of Jesus (2:5).
 - (2) In ch. 3, we see the race mindset of Paul (3:7-8).
 - (3) In ch. 4, we see the race mindset the Philippians are to have (4:6-8).

3. Finish Line.

- a. The finish line is to know Jesus intimately and be like him—spiritual maturity (vv. 10, 14-15).
- b. To reach the finish line, we must (1) focus intensely; and (2) strain forward (v. 13).
 - (1) Focus means living by God's priorities and time management.
 - (2) Straining forward means keeping up the pace and enduring through pain.
- c. Race hazards include:
 - (1) Poor nutrition (confidence in the flesh)(v. 8).
 - (2) Under-hydration (failure to walk by Spirit)(v. 3).
 - (3) Taking shortcuts (avoiding suffering)(v. 10).
 - (4) Running in the wrong direction (spiritual regression)(v. 16).

- d. Thankfully, we don't have to under our own power or alone.
 - (1) We race by the Spirit's resurrection power (i.e., Eric Liddell)(vv. 3, 10).
 - (2) We race with teammates who look out for us (i.e., the kids' stopping me from false trails).
- e. Biblical worldview aside:
 - (1) The biblical worldview is superior in that there is a finish line. History is linear, not cyclical. There is an evaluation, which means there is a purpose.

4. Gold Medal.

- a. Jesus, Paul, and the Philippians reached the finish line and won their gold medals.
 - (1) Jesus reached the finish line and won his gold medal (2:9; Heb 12:2).
 - (2) Paul reached the finish line and won his gold medal (vv. 11, 14; 2:16; 2 Ti 4:7-8).
 - (3) Now it's our turn (Jas 1:12).
- b. All believers will be resurrected to eternal life and receive a resurrection body (vv. 20-21).
 - (1) But spiritually mature believers who know Jesus intimately and have striven to be like him will be specially awarded (v. 14).
 - (2) Jesus' judgment seat is an award ceremony, not a courtroom.

5. Application.

- a. Paul's our coach. He urges us to win our gold medal. We must:
 - (1) Know the course map: expect the ups and downs of the Christian life.
 - (2) Focus and strain forward to the goal: know Jesus personally and intimately.
 - (3) Take hold of the gold: receive the appropriate reward at Jesus' judgment seat.
- b. If you're not enrolled in the race yet, do so now. The entry deadline is approaching.
- c. Let's finish with Louise Reardon's poem on Philippians 3.