

90 Days through the Bible

Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel

Opening thoughts

- Jim Boyd's dad – Eulogy
- “End of the Spear” – Nate Saint & Jim Elliot – Those who finish well leave a lasting legacy.
- Life is a race that we are to run in such a way as to win.

1 Corinthians 9 - *Running the Race*

²⁴Remember that in a race everyone runs, but only one person gets the prize. You also must run in such a way that you will win. ²⁵All athletes practice strict self-control. They do it to win a prize that will fade away, but we do it for an eternal prize. ²⁶So I run straight to the goal with purpose in every step. I am not like a boxer who misses his punches. ²⁷I discipline my body like an athlete, training it to do what it should. Otherwise, I fear that after preaching to others I myself might be disqualified.

- The Old Testament is full of people who ran - some winning and some losing. – What made the difference?
- We have read the stories this past week of some of the most noted O.T. personalities:
 - Joshua
 - Caleb
 - Deborah
 - Gideon
 - Abimelech
 - Jephthah
 - Sampson
 - Ruth & Boaz
 - Hannah
 - Eli
 - Samuel
 - Saul
 - Jonathan
 - David

Five observations as to why some finished well while others failed. Those that finished well:

1. Led lives that stayed consistent with their core (Biblical) values. They kept their eyes on the finish line (They were people of vision)

- Vision vs. values – vision is where you're going and values are how you will get there.
- Joshua was an example:

Joshua 23

6"So be strong! Be very careful to follow all the instructions written in the Book of the Law of Moses. Do not deviate from them in any way. 7Make sure you do not associate with the other people still remaining in the land. Do not even mention the names of their gods, much less swear by them or worship them. 8But be faithful to the LORD your God as you have done until now. *(Never wavier but stay consistent to the truths that got us here!)*

Joshua 24:15

But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your forefathers served beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD."

- Looking towards the final goal helps us not to get waylaid by the struggles of the day. They didn't lose focus.
- They never separated their convictions of faith from their actions.
- Great people have never been afraid to acknowledge their faith and let it be their compass.
 - Church and state issue.
 - Historically, effective social justice was never driven by politics but by the conviction of faith: (Socialism and communism were the results of political efforts for equality.)
 - Slavery – Martin Luther King Jr.
 - Woman's rights
 - Effective care for the poor
- Down fall of Judges: "Every man did what was right in his own eyes." An issue of relative vs. absolute truth. (No moral compass)

Judges 17:6

In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did what was right in his own eyes.

Judges 21:25

In those days Israel had no king, so the people did whatever seemed right in their own eyes.

2. Owned their faith – They understood that "God isn't a grandfather."
 - Every person must come to God by their own initiative.
 - There was no common denominator between godly or supportive parents and success.
 - Gideon – father was an idol worshiper.
 - Jephthah – Son of a prostitute
 - Ruth – a foreigner who clung to Naomi for parental support.
 - Eli's son were corrupt
 - Samuel was raised by Eli and his sons were corrupt.
 - Saul – came from a family of stately passion.

- Jonathan was Saul's son.
 - David wasn't even considered by his father as the leader of Israel.
 - Not an aristocracy [air-i-stock-rac-ee] – You can't inherit a personal relationship with God from your parents. In Jesus everyone can be great. Our lineage is based on adoption into God's family.
3. Recognized the necessity of God's power over human power.
- Ex. - Sampson - Saul
 - Insecurity was a great downfall – no fleece's - no baggage
 - Motivated by faith rather than by fear.
 - Fear of man
 - Fear of failure
 - People who are fearful lead with fear tactics.
4. Pursued servant-hood over position, prestige & power. [Samuel strength]
- Didn't ask god to bless what they were doing but rather wanted their lives to be a blessing to what God was doing.
 - Saul begged for Samuel's blessing.
5. Always said yes to the Lord (even when it was uncomfortable or unpopular.) [Examples - Saul vs. Debra]
- "Obedience is far better than sacrifice."
"God look what I did for you!" vs. "God did my life glorify you?"

In 1 Samuel 15 – In his insecurity Saul makes a politically correct decision to spare the life of King Agag and keeping the Amalekite sheep & cattle against the Lord's command. Samuel said, "Although you may think little of yourself, are you not the leader of the tribes of Israel?" Saul tries to tell Samuel of all the good things he has done but Samuel rebukes him.

1 Samuel 15:22 But Samuel replied, "What is more pleasing to the LORD: your burnt offerings and sacrifices or your **obedience** to his voice? **Obedience** is far better than sacrifice. Listening to him is much better than offering the fat of rams.

- Debra was an acting woman judge at a time when Israel was being oppressed by the Canaanites. [In all of Israel's history there were only four woman judges.]
- She led by empowering others and giving them the credit. [Barak]
- Stepped out when others wouldn't – took initiative and stepped out of her comfort zone.
- Broke status-quo – in Israel woman didn't normally lead.