

Plugged in 4- to Finish

Review:

Three weeks ago we started a series called plugged in Jim told the story of his career in computers. But by far, the most common problem that we saw over and over was the problem of the PC or monitor not being plugged in. The thing about not being plugged in was that no matter how many buttons you pushed, no matter how many keystrokes you tried, no matter what you did to the system, it wasn't going anywhere. It didn't matter how well you were trained or educated, how much experience you had, or how many experts you threw at the problem.

You could replace the power supply with the best and most state-of-the-art technology, but unless it was plugged in, it was a nice door stop.

Ex) Take a look at this lamp. Without it being plugged in, it's nothing more than decoration for the room. (plug in and have media bring slider 15 up)

In the same way, if you and I are not plugged in to the source of power or if we are only exercising biblical authority and principles in part for our Christian walk, we become little more than décor for the church

*****"and our power is dimmed" (bring slider 15 down to dim)**

And it doesn't matter what we try to tweek or fix in our lives. We can try to make more money, get married to a different spouse, change careers, change schools, change churches, change clothes and hairstyles, if we're not plugged into the power source, we will not function in our God-ordained purpose or potential, just as this lamp is not fulfilling its purpose.

So what is this power source?

***2 Timothy 1:7

For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline.

Dunamis- (miraculous) power, might, strength, marvelous works

***John 1:12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the **power** to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name,

Eksousía - power, authority, weight, especially: moral authority, influence

This God-Given power, from its base meaning, Not only gives us strength, but also authority. Not only did He put the “can do” in there, but He also put the “get to” in there, as well.

And we have access to this power and authority not because we deserve it, but because God in His mercy and grace has decided to adopt us into His family and we no longer relate to Him as orphans begging for His mercy, but we are now sons and daughters of the most high King.

This is probably one of most important concepts for you as a believer to understand. Because it’s in this understanding that we are able to **truly plug into** God’s strength and authority for our lives.

And When we do that....

*****Ex) Media bring slider 15 up to turn on lamp.**

“our light will so shine before men that they will see our good deeds and praise our father in heaven” (Matthew 5:16)

As we walk through this series together called “Plugged In” we’ll examine what it means to be plugged in to God in 4 separate areas of our lives. Our faith, our family, our finances, and finish...

*****Plugged in (review)...**

To Faith-

***** To Family-**

notice that nowhere in the verses given on loving one another or anywhere else in the bible does the word **ME** come up.

In this family the needs of the individual are the driving force behind all decisions, activities, discussions, etc. We also talked about being plugged in to what the Bible has to say about...

***** Finances**

Principle #1

Everything belongs to God.

*****Principle #2**

God is our source.

*****Principle #3**

Live with margin. (margin brings peace)

*****Principle #4**

Manage what you have been given well.

Sometimes we need fresh eyes to help ... Robert Irvine and restaurant impossible

*****Principle #5**

Giving will break the cycle.

---A strong point made was that the church often focuses so much on us giving, no matter what, that they fail to teach us how to manage our money...

ex) in a previous sermon where we talked about prayer, one of the points made was that we shouldn't really pray for God to get us out of something we've behaved our way into.

---it isn't, however, an excuse not to give,(10-10-80 rule), but you have to balance it with good stewardship and discipline. We can't put our money into God's magic slot machine with no regard for how we spend and hope that we'll win the jackpot. We are responsible for exercising discipline and good stewardship so that we can PLAN to give.

*****Video Transition to Today's topic (show football montage video)**

Today is a day (Super Bowl Sunday) which is all about the celebrated endzone. The goal, the score, the big finish, but a common theme you can see running throughout the video you just saw were bad finishes. A player running with all their might towards something that was not going to benefit them, or their team, what-so-ever. It will, in fact, cost their team in points and victories.

*****Title Page** Error! Objects cannot be created from editing field codes. Today's teaching is Part 4 and the final installment of our Plugged in series "**Plugged in...to Finish Well**"



*** Today, I want to start by telling you the story of that first ill-fated player named Roy Riegels of the 1929 Rose Bowl game between Reigels' team University California...Berkeley and Georgia Tech...

Background: On January 1, 1929, the Golden Bears faced the Georgia Tech Yellow Jackets at the Rose Bowl in Pasadena, California, USA. Midway through the second quarter, Riegels, who played center, picked up a fumble by Tech's Jack "Stumpy" Thomason. Just 30 yards away from the Yellow Jackets' end zone, Riegels was somehow turned around and ran 65 yards in the wrong direction.

Teammate and quarterback Benny Lom chased Riegels, screaming at him to stop. Known for his speed, Lom finally caught up with Riegels at California's 3-yard line and tried to turn him around, but he was immediately hit by a wave of Tech players and tackled back to the 1-yard line. The Bears chose to punt rather than risk a play so close to their own end zone, but Tech's Vance Maree blocked Lom's punt for a safety, giving Georgia Tech a 2-0 lead.

Riegels was so distraught that he had to be talked into returning to the game for the second half.

Commentary: We can get so overwhelmed thinking ahead because it is all we can do to keep up with the struggles of the day to day...the hour to hour. But Roy's coach knew that if he didn't get back in the game, he wouldn't finish well...and I don't think he was as concerned about how Roy would finish the football game, but more how he would finish the second half of his life if he didn't get back out on the field.

These are the actual quotes between Roy and the coach of Berkeley who was Nibs Price...

***Roy:** "Coach, I can't do it. I've ruined you, I've ruined myself, I've ruined the University of California. I couldn't face that crowd to save my life."*

***Coach:** "Roy, get up and go back out there — the game is only half over."*

Riegels turned in a stellar second half performance, including blocking a Tech punt. Lom passed for a touchdown and kicked the extra point, but Tech would ultimately win the game—and their second national championship—by a final score of 8-7. The example of how the distraught Riegels was persuaded to pick himself up, return to the field and play so hard during the second half is a lesson I think we need to learn...we need to stay plugged in to God's power in order to Finish Well in all the things we do.

Quote from Roy Reigels to a young high school player in the 1950's who also did the same thing...

*****"For many years I've had to go along and laugh whenever my wrong-way run was brought up, even though I've grown tired listening and reading about it. But it certainly wasn't the most serious thing in the world. I regretted doing it, even as you do, but you'll get over it."**—Letter from Riegels to Paramount High School's Jan Bandringa in 1957. Bandringa had intercepted a pass only to run it 55 yards into his own end zone, resulting in a safety for Centennial High, who won the game 9-7.

Introduction: In my observance as a Pastor, I am going to make a statement that I hope won't offend too many of you, but it is the honest truth...

I have seen good Christians and bad Christians and of all the Christians I have encountered, I don't see a lot of them finishing what they do (whatever season they're in) well.

After today's teaching, I hope that you will determine in your heart to be one of the few who do. Just like Paul...

*****Acts 20:24"But I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, so that I may finish my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God.**

So What does it mean to finish well?



*****Ex) arrow analogy...** as we age as believers, some of us grow broader like an arrow head but duller at the point. Our experiences in each season broaden us, but unless we stay focused on Jesus and his vision, we lose our sharp cutting edge of our purpose and we may finish, but we don't finish with the right kind of fruit that God intended. Still others of us are like an arrow head that is too narrow and not broad enough. We never grow past the one idea, vision, or purpose we have for ourselves. We may even have allowed a circumstance to define who we are instead of growing past our past...

We are like a band who is a one hit wonder...we play it to death for the rest of our lives hoping it will bring about some sort of big finish. But it only becomes tiresome to us and most certainly to those around us.

If we are to finish well...we have to become people that never lose the sharp edge of our focus (being Jesus' power and authority) even if through life's experiences, we are shaped, molded, and chipped away at in other ways. This only broadens us in order to have our scope and legacy much more impactful.

-It is no wonder that God likens us to arrows in

*****Isaiah 49:2**

² He has made My mouth like a sharp sword,

**In the shadow of His hand He has concealed Me;
And He has also made Me a select arrow,
He has hidden Me in His quiver.**

You notice, this scripture says nothing of us being shaped by the hand of Satan. Satan's tricks and sins of the flesh do not shape us into anything useful-they only destroy, but it is by the hand of God in our seasons of life and tests and trials that we are molded into something broader, stronger, purer, and better. Someone fit to finish the race well.

*****Ex) Barriers to Finishing Well...but this cannot be achieved if we have the components of our everyday life out of wack and out of priority with the will of God. Finishing well and with good fruit in any season is near impossible if we are too strongly tied to and bogged down with...**

*****bumbled finances,**

*****dysfunctional family relationships,**

*****abuse of power,**

*****lack of spiritual growth,**

*****pride (the very antithesis to spiritual growth),**

***** sins of the flesh.**

*****Idolatry (what you say? That's one of the old testament things...)**

*****Leviticus 26:1-4**

¹You shall not make for yourselves idols, nor shall you set up for yourselves an image or a *sacred* pillar, nor shall you place a figured stone in your land to bow down to it; for I am the LORD your God.

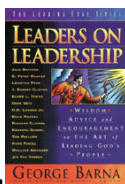
²You shall keep My sabbaths and reverence My sanctuary; I am the LORD.

³If you walk in My statutes and keep My commandments so as to carry them out,

⁴then I shall give you rains in their season, so that the land will yield its produce and the trees of the field will bear their fruit.

Commentary: this is the very essence of finishing well. God sets two paths before us of obedience and disobedience. The Israelites, in this passage, were bowing down to idols of wood and stone. We can overly judge them and say, "How stupid to be so deceived", but God gives us the same warning. We are still bowing down and worshipping the accumulation and possession of idols of paper, metal, wood, stone, plastic (for those of us who love to shop), chemicals, and even God's made of flesh. We are no different than the disobedient Israelites, we just have a few more mediums that we've crafted our idols out of.

There are some insights from George Barna's book, "Leaders on Leadership" that I want to share with you today...



*****Keys to Finishing Well...**

1. Maintain a vibrant relationship with God (right up to the end of days)
- ***2. Give evidence of a Christ-like Character (purity is essential)
- ***3. Make sure what you say and what you do are the same thing.
- ***4. Leave behind a lasting legacy (preferably positive- through investment in people-make disciples)
- ***5. Always keep your sense of destiny and God's purpose for your life before you (stay sharp as the point of the arrow in your determined path even if life's trials and seasons are seemingly chipping away at you. They are only shaping you for a bigger finish.
- ***6. Be a life-long learner (to avoid plateau)

Commentary: Practicing disciplines as a believer are essential to our starts, our growth, and most importantly...our finishes.

***Paul, in 1 Corinthians 9:24-27 says this,

²⁴Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but *only* one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win.

²⁵Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then *do it* to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable.

²⁶Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air;

²⁷but I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified.

Conclusion: We speak so much of New Seasons, and New Beginnings. Sometimes I wonder if it's because we don't really like the fruit we're seeing from the one we are already in. WE need to finish well the task God has put before us. I pray for you that as you reach the end of whatever season you are in, you will have run that race in order to win, and win big according to your God-given destiny.

God will then be in your winner's circle saying, "Well done, Good and Faithful Servant." (Matthew 25:21)