

Week 6: Running the Race as One [Pastor Theresa] July 26 (Ministry Fair)

Key Passage: Hebrews 12:1-3; Matthew 28:18-20

Focus: Before He left, Jesus left His followers with a mission of eternal significance. There is no greater calling that we can live for. All of heaven watched with bated breath to see what we will do with our one life on earth. Will we live for ourselves in isolation or will we band together as one for God's Kingdom?

Good Morning! I'm excited for what God has in store for us this morning. Over the last six weeks, we've been on a journey together discovering the heart of Jesus for his people to maintain and enjoy sacred rest so that it will move us into sacred service!

During this Sacred Service series we've talked about the power of "we." We've talked about purpose, gifts, finding our place, and what greatness looks like in the Kingdom of God.

And if I could summarize this entire series in one sentence, it would be this:

God never intended for us to simply attend church. He intended for us to BE THE CHURCH.

Turn to your neighbor and say, "Be the church!" Turn to your other neighbor and say, "It's go time!"

Today, Holy Spirit is asking, "What are you going to do with your one life?"

Because one day, every one of us will stand before Jesus and give an account for the life we've been given.

Not the life we wished we had.

Not the gifts we wished we possessed.

Not the opportunities we wished would have come our way.

We will give an account for our one life we have now!

Hebrews 12:1-3 HCSB says,

Therefore, since we also have such a large cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us lay aside every hindrance and the sin that so easily ensnares us. Let us run with endurance the race that lies before us, keeping our eyes on Jesus, the source and perfecter of our faith.

For the joy that lay before him, he endured the cross, despising the shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him who endured such hostility from sinners against himself, so that you won't grow weary and give up (Hebrews 12:1-3 HCSB).

I love this passage because it reminds us that life is not a spectator sport. We have been given a race to run. And Church, I believe heaven is watching.

I can almost picture Abraham leaning over the balcony of heaven. Moses. Esther. Peter. Paul. Men and women who said yes to God with their one life. And I wonder if they're asking:

"What will they do with theirs?" Will they pursue comfort? Will they remain isolated? Will they spend their lives accumulating things that won't matter in eternity? Or will they come together as one for the Kingdom of God?

The truth is, there is no greater calling than the one Jesus gave His followers before He ascended into heaven.

Let's read Matthew 28:18-20 (HCSB)

Then Jesus came near and said to them, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded

you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age (Matthew 28:18-20 HCSB).

This passage was and still is Jesus' final instructions to all of his disciples. To all who say Jesus is Lord and are living the Jesus way.

He didn't say, "Build bigger churches."
He didn't say, "Become successful."
He didn't say, "Live a comfortable life."
He said, "Go."

Go and do what? YES, he said Go and make disciples!

Church, there are people in Mililani who still don't know Jesus.

There are marriages waiting to be restored.

There are prodigals waiting to come home.

There are children down the hallway, in your neighborhood who need someone to teach them about the love of God.

There are people who will walk through our doors next week carrying burdens and baggage that only Jesus can heal.

And somehow, in His sovereignty, God has chosen to use you and I. Stop and think deeply about that church! Don't just let that pass through your mind!

The God of the universe could have chosen any method to reach the world, and He chose His Church.

Turn to neighbor and say, "He chose you!" Turn to your other neighbor and say, "He chose me!"

He Ordinary people. Broken people. People with stories. People with scars. People with hurts habits and hangups. People like you and me.

And He entrusted us with a mission of eternal significance.

Brothers and sisters, this mission is too important for us to live in isolation. The enemy loves isolation because isolated people forget they belong to something bigger than themselves.

However, as we have been learning all series God has a master plan. And from the very beginning, That plan was about His People. Not a single person but rather a people group.

A family.
A Body.
A Church.

And that's why Hebrews doesn't say, "Let me run my race."
It says, "Let us run with endurance."

There is a "we" woven throughout the Kingdom of God.

We worship together.
We pray together.
We serve together.
We laugh together.
We grieve together.
And together, we run.

Turn to your neighbor and say, "Let's run together!"

Walking with Jodi..

I think one of the greatest lies the enemy has ever convinced people to believe is this:

Someone else will do it.
Someone else will pray.
Someone else will disciple.
Someone else will serve.
Someone else will raise up the next generation.

But Church, someone else LIKE YOU ain't coming.

One day, our race will end. One day, someone else will stand on this stage. One day, another generation will tell the stories of what God did at New Hope Central Oahu. I know that is sobering to think about.

But this is a reality we will face. So the million dollar question this morning is: What story will we leave them?

Will we leave them a church full of consumers?

Or will we leave them a church full of disciples?

Will we leave them a church that watched?

Or a church that ran?

Because at the end of our lives, I don't think any of us will wish we had loved less, served less, or made less of a difference.

I think we'll wish we had trusted God more.
Loved people more.
And said yes to his call more.

Church, it's go time. This is our moment. This is our race. And I don't know about you, but I don't want to spend my life sitting in the stands while others run.

I want to stand before Jesus one day and say:
"Lord, I gave You my one life. I wasn't perfect. I stumbled at times. I got tired. But I kept my eyes on You, and I ran my race."

And I pray that together, as a church family, we can say:

Lord, we ran together.

We loved one another.

We served faithfully.

We made disciples.

And we gave YOU EVERYTHING we had.

Can I get an AMEN!?

Today, we're going to walk into our Ministry Fair.
But I don't want you to think of it as tables and sign-up sheets.
I want you to think of it as an opportunity to ask one simple question:

Jesus, where do You want me to run?

Because there is still work to do.
There are still people to reach.
There are still lives to change.
And there is still a King who is worthy of our one life.

So today is a call to action. It's truly and opportunity to lay every hindrance aside (including that feeling that wants to just dip and skip out on the ministry fair).

Turn to your neighbor and say, "Give the Lord a chance and stay for the fair!

Let's fix our eyes on Jesus. Let's run with endurance.
And let's run as one. Because when the race is over, may it be said of New Hope Central Oahu: "They didn't watch from the sidelines. They ran. And they ran together."

OHANA GROUP QUESTIONS:

1. What stood out to you most from today's message? Why?
2. Hebrews 12 says we are all running a race. What do you think God is asking you to do in this season of your life?
3. Have you ever felt like your gifts or abilities didn't matter? How does today's message remind you that everyone has a part to play?
4. As you visit the Ministry Fair today, where do you feel God may be inviting you to say "yes" and get involved?
5. What would you like people to say about the way you lived your life and served God when your race is finished?