

Running The Race

by Randy Krahn

This sermon emphasizes the importance of obedience and submission to authority, drawing parallels between managing employees in a business setting and following God's commands. It highlights the need to do what God asks, not what we think is best, and the consequences of disobedience. The speaker urges listeners to compete according to God's rules, to be disciplined in all things, and to run the race of faith with certainty and self-control, seeking an imperishable crown through obedience to God's word.

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 9:24, Romans 6:16, Romans 12:1, John 14:15, Hebrews 12:1, 2 Corinthians 11:3, Isaiah 53:1, Ezekiel 18:24, John 8:34, Romans 12:2

Topics: "Obedience to God", "Discipline in Faith"

Description

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Transcript

Recently, we have a business that we oversee and we have a few employees and one of our employees was working for us for about a year and, you know, he gets the work done and he does his job, but we were starting to find out that there were problems and things that we had asked to be done weren't being done. And so, I made a trip out to go to our place of business and it's out of town and I had a talk with this employee and I said, you know, it's going to go real well with us if you just do what we ask you to do and you give us an accounting every day of what you did and your time and I said, we won't have any problems. But if you don't do that, then we're not going to be able to work together and so the question was before I left, can we work together? He was a good employee, he worked hard, he showed up and he did his work, he did different things, but the problem is he did his own thing.

He did his own thing. He did what he thought best. He didn't do what we thought best.

You know, there's a lot of Christians today, they do what they think best and they don't do what the father thinks best, either because they didn't hear when the father was speaking, they couldn't hear or they didn't hear when the boss said, they don't remember. And there's a people in the time in scriptures where it says that everyone did what they thought best in their own eyes. Everyone did what they thought best.

You know what, recently we had to let this employee go, we had to say we found someone else and maybe the other brother, the other fellow was quicker, maybe at his work. This fellow that we got is maybe a little slower, but we know exactly that he's doing exactly what we ask and he's being obedient to the rules that we've given, the guidelines we've laid out. And Paul says in 1 Corinthians 9, he says that if we don't compete according to the rules, then we're going to be disqualified, or in other words, you get sacked.

And we can read that passage in 1 Corinthians 9 where Paul's speaking about himself as a runner in a race, in 1 Corinthians 9 verse 24 he says, do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize. Run in such a way that you may obtain it. This employee, he'd show up for work, he would do his work, but we said just let us know that you made it to work, because he didn't live there and we're out of town, but he never did that.

And so we'd always have to be wondering all day, is he working, is he not working? Is he doing what we asked, is he not doing what he asked? And we could never get a hold of him, and so it was causing us a lot of grief. He was running, he was doing, but he wasn't being obedient to some simple exhortations. And Paul says in the same way, we all run in a race, but only one receives the prize.

One of the rules was, if we don't get your hours at the end of the day, we will assume you didn't work that day, because we need to know to be accountable for your time, right? We can't just do as we please when we go to work, we have to give an account for our hours. And so we would get two days we would have no hours, then all of a sudden, three months later we would get an invoice for hours that were worked on certain days. When we clearly laid out, we gave a binder, we wrote it down, and we had him read it, and we signed these things, and we gave ample opportunity for him to do according to as we asked, but he was unwilling because he wanted to do his own thing.

And you know what, a lot of times the Lord has given us exhortations from the prophets in previous times, from the seers, through his word, through the scriptures, but you know what, we have another way worked out. Because you know what, we're servants of the Most High God, and we're ambassadors of Christ, and we're running in this race, but we have to compete according to a certain set of rules. And if we don't want to compete according to the rules, we're going to get sacked.

We're going to think that we're in a good position, and find out that we've been disqualified. We're not going to get paid for our hours, because we made it very clear that we have to do things in a certain way to be pleasing before the Lord. And it's important that we take stock that we are doing what Jesus says.

Jesus when he came on the earth, he was the exact image of the invisible God, yet he said he submitted himself completely to what his father said. He didn't do anything unless he heard first. And we as employees need to submit ourselves to those authorities that tell us things that we need to do.

Unless they come in direct conflict with your faith, and your convictions, you need to submit, even if they're harsh, your boss. But when it comes to scripture, we might not understand it, but we need just simple childlike faith to be obedient. And Paul goes on from here, he says, run in such a way that you may obtain the prize.

Everyone who competes for a prize is disciplined in all things. He exercises self-control. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we, we're obedient to what the word of God says, that we might receive an imperishable crown.

So we have something to throw at Jesus' feet. Now this is what Paul says in verse 26, therefore I run in this way, not with uncertainty, I'm not like someone who fights, who beats in the air, and doesn't ever land the intended blow that it was supposed to be intended on the flash, or hit the mark with the arrow that was sent out, but I discipline my body. I discipline myself.

I might not feel like doing what God's word says, I might not want to do what God's word says, but I'm compelled to be obedient to what the spirit of God says to the church, because I know it's imperative to my walk with Christ. And it's important for us as Christians, sometimes we start and we have some convictions, and then we get going and we become rich, increased in goods of need of nothing. And we don't know that we're miserable, blind, and naked, and poor.

We become blind to these things. I remember when I was first serving Christ, I had such a zeal for the lost, one lost soul. I would just find them, I would be burdened, and I would go see them, and I would share, and I would just love to share my faith with people.

Dan's like that. And then all of a sudden I had opportunity, the Lord gave opportunity for us to go to Haiti, and to go there and we didn't know what it was going to look like, whether we were going to go from hut to hut or what, there was nothing there at the time, where we met a brother from Haiti, and he was here on a visit, and the Lord put us together, and we ended up over there. And we rented a little house, it was a little house with a little porch.

I think it was like, if I remember correctly, it was like \$30 a year to rent this house. And there we started to have a Bible study with some few people that wanted to serve Christ. And so we found some mature brothers from other churches who came alongside and started to have a weekly Bible study with people that were in the community there where we were in a city called Grand Guave in Haiti, which is, I don't know, about 30 miles outside of Port-au-Prince.

And we went there, there was a little, about 30 people, this little Bible study, and I didn't know what to expect. And I went there and I said, Lord, you know, who am I? You know, I don't have a Bible school degree. I went to Bible school, and when I was there, I was rebellious, and I did my own thing, like I've been preaching about.

And then I would put my little time card in, and I would punch in, and then me and a friend of mine, we would go and work out at the gym when I was a teenager. And then we'd come back after all the Bible studies were done, and then we'd move our time cards back. And I was living like a devil while I was at Bible school.

And now I got born again in 1998, and I have this passion for Christ. And I used to be a deceiver and an antichrist, and telling people that I was a Christian, but I lived like Satan in my secret life. And now I have this desire for Christ, and people know my past.

They know that I'm a scoundrel apart from Christ. How are they going to believe that I'm born again? Nobody will even give me an opportunity to share my testimony. But Lord, you've opened a door for me to go among the poor.

They don't know me there. Maybe they'll receive this testimony there. And we stood there, we would go in the evenings, and there was a little light, and they had a small generator that we were able to get.

And there was a little light bulb that hung over this porch. And we would just go to this porch, and we would go at night, it would get dark at six, and we'd go and preach the good news. We'd stand on this little porch, we'd start preaching.

And the people would come from out of the bush from their huts, and they would come. Many of them we couldn't see. And all of a sudden, there would be hundreds of them coming in.

I think maybe even up to 1000 of them would come and they would be all in there. And we had no mics, we had no sound equipment, but I'm a loud guy, and I would just share my testimony, what Jesus did for me. You know, and then the people, they would come, and I would be crying there with the blacks there.

And I'd be weeping and praying for them, and they would be repenting and turning to the Lord. And I would just weep and say, Lord, how is this possible that you could use someone as foul as I used to be to come here and to this place where, man, I forsaken place. And you have people here that you want to draw to yourself.

And I'm no pastor, I'm no nothing. I'm just some guy that wants to share the hope that I have in Jesus. And that's what Jesus can do with every one of you.

It's the whosoever wills. If you'll come under the authority of Christ, and you'll begin to in simple obedience to do what God says, then he'll have use for you. And you'll begin to hear his voice and you'll begin to follow him.

But you have to come under that authority. I remember just weeping, we went for like a week straight, we'd just go back there and the people would come. At the end of that week that we were there, a church was planted, they built it with crooked sticks and a tin roof, we all chipped in and we put this church that stands there to this day.

And there was like, I think there was like almost 200 people that were there together with the 30 that were added to this little church. And therein a ministry began. And that ministry today is called Haiti Arise Ministries.

And it began from just some simple brothers with simple faith, sharing what Jesus did for them. And Jesus poured out his spirit and touched them. You know, I was thinking of Duncan Campbell, and he had gone on and had a real encounter with the Lord.

And then all of a sudden, there was this season in his life where he was doing a lot of work for God and a lot of religious activity. And his daughter came into him. He heard his daughter singing one morning early and she was singing about Jesus.

And he was touched in his heart. And he asked his daughter and he said, you know, why are you have such joy in this song in your heart like this morning? Like what's going on in your spirit? She was young. I think she was maybe 16 at the time.

And she said, oh, I'm in love with Jesus. Can you say that this morning that you're in love with Jesus? Is that why you have a song in your heart this morning? Or is it religious duty that we have to come to a meeting? Is it because of obligation? Because you know, it's the right thing to do. I said, because we want to, in expectation, hear from God so that we could continue to be stirred up in our spirit and fulfill that word that says we should not forsake the gathering together as a matter of some.

But that we would encourage one another daily to contend for the faith, which was once delivered to us. Are you in love with Jesus? And he got so convicted, Duncan Campbell. And he started to think, and she said, he said, Dad, don't take this the wrong way, something like that.

And she says, you know, when is the last time? I know you're doing church work and you're going all over the place and you're popular now and so to speak. And when is the last time you knelt by a poor sinner and led him to Jesus? And he said he was just so grieved in his spirit, he started to say, God, I got to get right with you. And he had a vision of hell and people just going down into hell.

And he just started to weep and he started to groan and he got this burden for the lost again. And the daughter came alongside him and she just came and she just started to pray over him while he was groaning and weeping on the floor. Lord, don't let daddy's reason leave him.

Don't let him lose his reason. Don't let him go mental. And when you get that kind of a burden for the lost, that kind of a passion for people who don't know Christ, people who think they know Christ, but they're not competing according to the rules, they're not walking in obedience to the faith.

You know, what had happened was. He wasn't supported at the time when he had first begun his work with Christ, and then they made him a minister and they gave him a little ticket, you know, so that he could have a little, a little reputation maybe. And then they gave him a small salary because he was getting married and he needed to take that salary, you know, and all that.

And and then he found that he wasn't able to kind of speak the same. He didn't have the same impact. He didn't have the same passion.

He didn't see the anointing working the same way all the while he was doing his work. And he was wrestling with God there and he decided that he was going to resign from taking his salary and he was going to go back to walking by faith and trusting God for his provisions. And you know what? It changed for him again, and the power of God manifested in his life again for souls.

You know, I don't know what it is for each and every one of us, but you know what the scripture says? The just shall live by their faith. But if any man shrink back, my soul is no pleasure in him. You know, we like security.

We have all kinds of backup plans. We want to have our RSPs. We want to have, you know, our savings.

We want to have this. We want to have that. And and so we've justified it as wisdom.

But you know what? Where is our simple childlike faith? And he says, blessed are the poor because they shall be rich in faith. And you know what? They have to lean on God. They have to trust in God for their daily food, for their provisions.

They have to cry out to God and hear from God. And a lot of times we've become so wise in our own opinion. We don't need to trust in God.

We trust in our Benjamins that says in God we trust. We trust in money. We trust in our wisdom.

We trust in our reputation. We trust in our ministries. We trust in who knows what our strength, our abilities.

Rather than saying, Lord, here I am without you, I am nothing. Have mercy upon me, O God. Have mercy upon me and help me.

Paul says, I run in this way, not with uncertainty. Verse twenty six. I don't fight in this way as one who beats the air aimlessly.

But I discipline myself. Discipline myself in a spiritual sense to say, you know what? I'm not going to allow myself to become puffed up with spiritual pride. I'm not going to allow myself to compromise and say, you know what? I'm mature now.

I can handle some of these compromises. I'm not going to allow myself to be disobedient to what God's word says because I have a better way worked out. He says, I discipline myself and I bring myself in subjection to what God's word says, lest after I have preached to others, I myself should be become disqualified from the race that were disqualified in the Greek is is number ninety six.

You can look it up in the Greek dictionary. It's a documents. It means worthless, rejected, a castaway, a reprobate.

Paul says, after I preach to others, I myself should become disqualified, a reprobate, a castaway from the faith. And so we have to take the more earnest heed to the things that we've heard, lest we drift away. We have to make our call in election.

Sure. We have to take heed to the things that God says, because you say, oh, well, you know, for three years it's gone well, I'm just not bearing fruit anymore in my life, just not walking in the love of God anymore. And then he goes and says, cut it down.

Why does he use up the ground? He's not bearing fruit anymore. Give it to him who has ten talents, that one talent that he has, that he's put in the ground, because to him who has more shall be given, and the one who seems to have even what he has shall be taken from him. I was reading in Isaiah 53 this morning, Isaiah 53 and verse one, Lord, who has believed our report and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? And when I think of having an employee, I think of having a right hand.

I think of having a right hand man. And we know that Jesus is at the right hand of the power. And we say, Lord, who has believed our report when we confess Jesus is the Christ, when we say no one can come to the Father, but by me, Jesus said, when we think of what Jesus said, he says, he hears my voice, follows me.

And he says in John 15, I am divine and you're the branches. Apart from me, you can do nothing, abide in me and let my words abide in you. And you can ask what you desire.

It shall be done for you. But who has believed our report to whom has the power, the strength of God been revealed? Jesus is God's man for the hour when he manifests the exact image of the heart and the nature of God in human form. Have you believed in Jesus? Have you believed the words of Jesus? Have you followed the scriptures and said, it's important that I'm obedient to exactly what Jesus has said? Are you self-disciplined in your life to say, you know what? I'm not going to practice sin, not going to be one who who stands at the judgment seat of Christ.

I heard a message this week and his brother said, all roads lead to the judgment seat of Christ. All roads lead to the judgment seat of Christ, where we have to give an accounting of the things that we've done in

the body, whether good or bad. And then when we stand before him and we say, Lord, Lord, I prophesied in their name, I had a gift of prophecy and he and he says to you, listen, I don't know you.

You said, no, I spoke your words. You said, no, no, you spoke your words, not my words. For if if you would have stood in my counsel and you would have heard my words, you would have caused my people to turn from their sin.

But you strengthen the hands of evildoers, you comforted people and gave them a false security while they were in their sins, rather than pointing them to Jesus, who would save them from their sins, not in their sins, from their sins. You say, Lord, I did miracles in your name. Yeah, I don't know you.

You know, you were of those who called fire down from heaven and you caused my people to err and to follow after your gospel. And and those people received a strong delusion to believe lies. We did many wonders in your name.

I don't know you. And all of them received the same answer, you practice sin in your secret life, you were practicing sin, you practice lawlessness. You never walked in the law of liberty by which Christ has made us free.

You walked according to the dictates of your own evil hearts and you come up with a gospel that made provision for the flesh to obey it in its lusts. I don't know you. It says in Ezekiel 18, the day that a righteous man turns from his righteousness, in other words, doing what is right and he begins to practice sin.

It says none of the righteous things which he has done will be remembered. None of the righteous things which he has done. In other words, his name gets blotted out of the book.

We like the opposite of that. The day that a wicked man turns from doing what is wrong and practicing sin and he repents and he turns to Christ and he does what is right. None of the wicked things that he has done will be remembered.

We love that part, but we don't like the other part. And then we stand up and we say, Lord, your way is not fair. Once a son, always a son.

Your way is not fair. He's covenant keeping. You're in it for the blessing or the curse.

You give his people Israel and Jeremiah three, a certificate of divorce. And then he says, return to me for I'm married to you. He tells the lost son, the prodigal son, he looks for him every single day.

And then when he finally comes to his own reason and he's ready to humble himself and to repent, he meets him on the way where he's at. And he says, this son of mine was dead and he's alive again. This son of mine was lost and he's found once a son, always a son.

But you can have dead sons and dead daughters. You were dead in your trespasses and sins. Lord, I prophesied in your name while I was sleeping with prostitutes.

Lord, I prophesied in your name while I was looking, clicking on the pornography. Lord, I had all this knowledge. I was teaching about you while I had the booze in my hand at the pub and I was drinking and swilling and looking at other people's wives.

Lord, I did all this in your name. You practice lawlessness. I never knew you.

When you take seriously, Lord, who has believed our report? To whom has the arm of the Lord, the power of God been revealed? Have you met the power of God? Have you met Jesus in sincerity? Do you know him in truth? What has Jesus done for you? Has he given you an extra two dollars an hour? Or do you have a Jesus from the preachers who prophesied by bail for profit, for prosperity? Is that the Jesus that you have? Because that Jesus will profit you nothing. And Paul goes on in 2nd Corinthians in chapter 11 to say, I'm afraid for you, just as the serpent has deceived Eve by his craftiness. Even so, your minds seem to have been corrupted by the simplicity that is in Christ.

For if one comes and he brings to you another Jesus and a different gospel than you have received or a different spirit that you receive, you're putting up with it beautifully. You love that gospel. You need to be careful about these things.

I'm going to tell you, there's only one Jesus. Only one that can save it's Jesus with the big J. But there's a lot of denominations out there that don't believe in Jesus, that he's able to save his people from their sins. They believe that if you accept Christ and you just still practice sin, you're eternally good.

And you know what? These are people who are sending people to hell and they're strengthening the hands of evildoers and the church is lukewarm and dead and going to hell in many cases because people don't know the true Jesus Christ, the one who has power to save to the uttermost those who are being set apart or sanctified. Another gospel and a different Jesus. And it's been perverted.

The gospel's been perverted. It's a righteousness by faith in Jesus Christ. And he says this, that if you confess with your mouth, the Lord Jesus, the second part is equally important that you have faith in your heart.

Have you believed the report? That Jesus is raised and he's seated at the right hand of the power and he can raise you up with Christ. Then he can save you from your sins. Jesus told those Jews who believe in it, believed in his name and John eight come to me to be free.

And they said, oh, we're free. We're, we're God's people. We're God's children.

We were children of Abraham. We've never been in bondage to anyone. We are free.

You can confess that you're free all you want, but it's the reality that you're free from sin. But do you know something against yourself? My encouragement to you is to confess your sin. He's faithful and just to forgive you of your sin and not just forgiveness, brothers.

We need cleansing to cleanse us from all, all, all unrighteousness. This is the fruit of our genuine believing faith. Genuine faith produces a power in us to overcome the gravity of sin.

We have to overcome sin. Every one of us, we have to get victory over fear. We have to get victory over anxiety.

We need victory over sexual sin. We need victory over grumbling and complaining. That's when we become like those grumblers and complainers in Jude who feasts without fear.

So it says, knowing the kindness of the Lord and the terror of the Lord, we persuade men. He can be your best friend, but at the judgment seat, if you have practiced it, unconfessed sin, sexual sin, you've got secrets, you've got all this stuff in your life, you're going to have a problem with God and you're not going

to be able to blame me for saying that preacher lied to me. If my preachers had stood in my council and heard my words, they would have preached against sin and they would have turned their congregations from sin and many of them would have repented.

But he said, you instead strengthen the hands of evil doers because you know what? A lot of the preachers are doing the same things. We need to take the most earnest heed to the things that we are hearing lest we drift away. You know how you drift? Do nothing.

Do nothing. Just procrastinate in your walk with God. Well, you know, I know recently I've been telling myself, I got to lose some weight.

I got to lose some pounds. And you know what? Then all of a sudden I went to the heart doctor and he told me the high, high blood pressure. Well, I guess I need to take what he says seriously and I need to start to lose some weight.

And so now all of a sudden, I'm not motivated from love, I'm motivated from fear. And so I say it's time for me to get serious about this thing. Whether you're motivated from love or motivated from fear, either way, the truth is going to make you free.

You've got to respond to the truth. I can tell myself it's not true. But when I take my own blood pressure and the thing tells me what I'm reading, I can't call it a liar.

I have to face the facts. And if I know that I have unconfessed sin in my life and I'm calling myself one of the king's kids, I am looking at the truth of God's word that it says no one who is a Christian who says they follow Christ, you can't practice sin. You say, what's practicing sin, brother? Well, my kids play baseball and they practice once or twice a week.

And if you're practicing sin once or twice a week, then you have to repent of it and you need to ask Jesus to help you because you can't overcome it apart from his power and you need to start to believe that God is able to do it. And you keep battling, whether it's anger or whether it's bitterness or whatever it is, you keep fighting it and confessing it and crying out to God until you gain the victory. Because we believe in a Christ who's raised from the dead and we believe a Christ is able to raise us up with him.

That's what it says in Romans six. We've been raised with Christ. Therefore, seek those things which are above.

We need to renew our minds and we need to glorify God, not just in our spirit, in our souls, but in our bodies. It says in Romans 12 to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice to God, which is a reasonable act of worship, not just service, not just as a servant, worship. You want to worship God in the spirit of holiness, then offer your hands, your eyes, your feet and your tongues and your ears, everything to God and say, Lord, use it for your glory that people can see Jesus.

We want to see Jesus manifested in our mortal flesh. We want Jesus to be glorified through his Holy Spirit in our mortal bodies. We want to be conformed into that image of Christ.

He says that he will conform us into the exact image of the invisible God, which is Jesus. We can become like Christ. That's what Christian is, anointed ones, and he made us joint heirs with Christ, so we are partakers of that nature through the Holy Spirit, so we don't have to make excuses for why this and why that.

We now just need to repent and turn, repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. That's what it means when you truly believe you're obedient. If my employee would have believed that I was serious when I put that book there and I laid all these things out and I says, now I'm serious now, this is like we're on a year now.

If you're not going to fill out your time cards and send them to us every day, you will not get paid. Oh, well, this guy's so good, he's paid me every cent so far. He's he's not like that.

He's going to pay every every penny, whether I obey or don't obey, because he's just good. No, there's a severity side to it. We have to take seriously what the Lord Jesus Christ says in the scriptures.

Otherwise, we're going to find ourselves on the outside looking in since outside of the dogs, outside of the sorcerers, outside are the adulterers. These are the ones, the kidnapers. These are the ones that are outside.

No, we want to be on the inside, we want Christ in us and us and him to abide in the teachings of Christ is to love the Lord with all your heart, to love him with all your mind, with all your soul and with all your body, your strength, that Christ may become our all in all. And through that, we are going to radiate the love of God, which surpasses knowledge. People are going to see Christ in you.

And that is the goal that if people see Christ in you, you won't be fighting with unbelievers. You're going to be loving them. You're going to be laying your life down for them.

It says that Jesus, while we were yet sinners, he died for the ungodly. You know, it was a time not too long ago when someone came to my house and. And I wasn't too fond of them.

And the Lord said, I want you to wash their feet, I said, well, I'd like to wash my wife's feet and my children's feet, and I want you to wash their feet. I thought, oh, man, this is an unbeliever, I don't see this is Bible, you know, and and so I was obedient, I knew it was God. And the next day I got very frustrated with that and I said, Lord, I was I was in my prayer time and I vocalized, I said, Lord, I'm not happy with you because you asked me to do something for someone I considered at that time an enemy.

And you asked me to wash that person's feet. And you never did that, you washed your disciples feet. And I heard Jesus speak to me, it might as well been audible, but it was like loud in my head and he said, I washed Judas's feet.

And I just began to weep. I said, Lord, I don't know your ways. I knew your voice, but I don't know your ways.

Go away from me, Lord, I'm a wicked man. It's important for us if we want to learn his ways to love our enemies, not just people who are good to us, not just people who who give us gifts and show us kindness and are really good people, but people who are enemies to have genuine love for them. We have to learn his ways.

I believe Jesus loved Judas unto the end. The scripture says he wishes none to perish, that all should come to repentance, but he knew that wouldn't happen. He loved him to the end.

He didn't want anyone to perish, for God so loved the world that he gave his only son that whosoever believes in Jesus should not perish, but have this everlasting life that's found in the Holy Spirit. Ask the

Holy Spirit to fill you and to change you and to empower you to live according to God's word, because according to the law, you'll never be able to do it. That's why the law was written.

It's good for us to see what sin is, but that we are utterly powerless to be obedient apart from the power of God. And so we say, Lord, I can't do this. Help me, Lord Jesus, and get out from law and get into grace and walk in the spirit of Christ, in the power of God, who's able to save you to the uttermost in Jesus name.

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