

Self Control or Castaways Missions Conf. 1985

by William MacDonald

The sermon emphasizes the importance of self-discipline and perseverance in Christian service, highlighting the possibility of being saved but still being a castaway.

Duration: 48:42

Scripture: John 10:27

Topics: "Self-Control"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker expresses his joy in seeing young men and women dedicating their lives to serving the Lord. He emphasizes the importance of discipline and self-control in the Christian life, using examples of athletes in a race, wrestlers, and boxers. The speaker quotes Sam Shoemaker, who wrote about the battle for character and the temptation to indulge the body and mind. He also highlights the need for discipline in various areas of life, such as food, sleep, and sexual purity. The speaker concludes by mentioning the importance of exercising discipline in order to avoid falling into temptation, using the example of King David.

Transcript

I hadn't heard this until I came to this chapel. It's a new song for me. Don't pay attention to me, listen to the musician.

I think perhaps the next time we do this we're going to have each of you come up. It's a lot different when you're up here hearing it coming from the heart, not necessarily behind your head. This time I told Brother MacDonald I'd give him 40 minutes.

It looks like he's going to get 43, and that's just that much more ministry. Brother Bill. Well, it seems very recent that I was here last summer at this same time.

Last summer the missionary retreat was for missionaries. This year it's for missionaries and prospective missionaries. And three young men came with me from California.

And when we got to the airport in Harrisburg last night we met a young man named Tim Wager, and he's from Bismarck, North Dakota. And I've asked Tim if he'd like to give a word of testimony and tell you something of his exercises of soul with regard to the mission field, and then one of the fellows from California will be following him. So, Tim, if you'd like to come up, please, and tell us how the Lord's been

working in your life.

All right. First of all, I want to say that the fellowship, and I guess that just says it, the fellowship has been fantastic, and it's been like a cool drink of water. I've really enjoyed being in Pennsylvania, and I've only been here a day.

I was saved. I was raised in a Christian home and saved at the age of ten years old. The Lord made me aware of my sin and saved my soul.

At the age of 19, through what I would say is definitely an inspired writing, and I'm not saying that because the man that wrote it happens to be sitting here, but I picked up a book at the age of 19, and the first sentence said, True Christianity is an all-out commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ. And it stopped me in my tracks and broke my spirit, brought me to my, not even to my knees, I guess to my face, on the floor in my bedroom at 19 years old, and I decided that the Lord not only wanted my soul and my sins, He wanted my entire life. And at that moment, there was a real breaking in my life of stubbornness of will, and it's something I'm sure that has to go on for the rest of my life, knowing my own soul.

But the Lord at that time really grabbed ahold of me and said, You have to serve me all the time. And it's something I've been struggling with ever since, I think. And in the early 70s, I started thinking of the mission field.

I was fresh out of college and had a lot of romantic notions of the mission field and dreamed of a place called Shelmara, Ecuador. And I always wanted to go there. And after working for a couple of years as a teacher, I saved up the funds and I went to Ecuador and spent a month there working, and the Lord straightened me out on the romanticism of missions.

And put me back into teaching for another seven years to grow up and mature a little bit and do some very serious thinking. And about two years ago, I had my heart set on going to Paraguay, South America. And again, the Lord stopped me.

And I realized I had still more time needed to be spent in the Word, more time spent humbling myself before the Lord. And it brought me to the point that I realized that now the doors have been opened. I am hoping to depart for Paraguay with my wife and our two children.

Probably in October. And one of the big things that He's brought me to realize is that it's nothing of me. The Lord, out of His graciousness and His mercy, has decided to use me, which is unbelievable.

He's using me. And He's called me to go to Ecuador. Or not to Ecuador, to Paraguay.

I wanted to be in Ecuador. I got there once for a month, and that's all I can handle. But I'm getting to go to Paraguay.

And it's the grace of God. It's a tremendous opportunity for me to serve. And yet, I think I'm going to be served more than I'm going to serve.

I really sense the hand of the Lord in my life, and I think He's going to do some tremendous things in my soul in teaching me as I get a chance to work and try to serve Him the best I can. I do ask for your prayers in this. Thank you.

I'd like to introduce the three young men from the Bay Area in California. I'd like to say just that God is really working in the Bay Area. You read a lot about the coops out in California, and you can find anything out there, but God is there, too.

Where sin abounds, grace does much more abound. There's an assembly down in San Jose or Cupertino, and the young people there have a missionary prayer meeting once a month, Saturday night. And God has really been using that prayer meeting, and one of the young fellows that's been instrumental in it is Dave Johnson.

Dave, would you just stand up and turn around and face the folks? Dave is a dentist, but have no fear. This is a completely social meeting tonight. And Dave hopes to be going out to the Philippines.

Really, it's a wonderful story. He was able to tell it this morning, some of it in Harrisburg, and I hope that some of you will be able to get to meet Dave, and that you'll add him to your prayer list, too. He's applied for his visa, and now it's just a matter of God moving governmental officials.

And then Roger Raybuck. Roger, would you stand up? Roger is from the Fairhaven Assembly in San Leandro, and he has a wife and four children, and they are hoping to go out to Zaire, New York, in September of this year, praise the Lord. And we're really thrilled about this.

Roger was telling us this morning how he was brought up in a Mormon home and saved by the grace of God and now being directed out to the field. And the other fellow whom I'd like to call up to give his testimony is Randy White. Some of you have already read about Randy and Cindy in Missions Magazine, only he goes by another name.

He goes by the name Steve White in Missions Magazine for good and sufficient reasons. And so I'm going to ask Randy to come up and tell us how the Lord's been working in his life. Thank you, Bill.

Like Tim, I am enjoying my stay in Pennsylvania, as well, although I have to be honest and say that until a couple weeks ago, I wasn't exactly sure where Pennsylvania was on the map. Typical Californian. That's what they're teaching in our schools these days.

But one thing I did know about Pennsylvania as I found out that that's where the conference was is that you had thunderstorms here. And I don't know if any of you can relate to this, but in California we just rarely have a thunderstorm. And so short of actually praying for a thunderstorm this week, the Lord, knowing my heart, granted a thunderstorm today just before the 11 o'clock service.

Actually, it was a 930 service this morning. And I've already checked into the weather to find out that there's more anticipated for Thursday. But actually, it wasn't the thunderstorms that drew me here, but it was the anticipation of what I would really learn from this conference.

And it's a really unique, practical conference. And I'm really looking forward to it. And I'm just really privileged that I'm able to come and be a part of it.

You know, the wonderful thing about the Lord is that I was saved in 1977 at the age of 17. And the wonderful thing about God is that when he saves us, he really becomes a father. And we become his children, and he just really takes care of us, and he is interested in every intimate part of our lives.

There's a verse in Proverbs 3, 5, and 6 that says, Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not unto your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will direct your path. That's really a beautiful thing.

He will direct your path. And as far as Ireland is concerned, he began directing my path in that area in 1979. For a short summer, three months, I went on Operation Mobilization.

To be honest with you, I, at the time, chose Ireland basically because I was miserable and being able to learn any foreign language. And Ireland, they spoke English. So that was really the main motivation at that time.

I wanted some missionary exposure. But when I got to Ireland, I began to develop an interest in the country. And then God began to do many wonderful things.

He brought a couple a short time later from Ireland to San Leandro, California for this discipleship intern training program, which some of you might be aware of. It's a year-long program. And he brought this couple out.

He led me into that program the following year. And as well as that, along with my classmates, God brought another couple from Ireland, which is really great. And then this particular brother, who disciplined me the year before I went into the program, invited my wife and I to come out to Ireland and to work in their local assembly for a year.

And that was a wonderful, fantastic year of my Christian life, and for my wife as well. Not only did God bless in giving us fruit in our ministry that we have never seen before, but he also gave us a child there, which was really an experience. Our first daughter, our first child, her name is Rebecca Aaron, which means from Ireland.

And as well as that, it alluded to the fact that my name was changed for a year, which was quite interesting. When people would call me Steve, a lot of times I wouldn't turn around because I'm not used to that. But it's because the word Randy has some bad connotations, and so they thought it was better just to go by my middle name, which I did.

The dilemma is, I guess, when I go back, Lord willing, in early 1987, what I'll be called. But maybe I'll go back to Steve again. So that's what the Lord did in that year.

We were involved in teaching and discipleship, evangelism, and it was a fantastic year. And it was a one-year commitment. We were called back and we wanted to go back to our home assembly at Fairhaven.

And currently I'm back and working at a local police department. And as I said, with the elders giving us the green light just recently, we hope to return to Ireland in early 1987. You know, one verse that really struck me, and that was sort of like a theme verse for me the whole year, was this verse in 2 Corinthians 3.5, and it says, Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God.

And I'll tell you, that is really true. And not only for me, it's true for us. Without God, we can't do anything.

And with God, all things are possible. And that was something that I really claimed that promise, and it's a promise that I'll be claiming in the future. So if you would add me to, or add my wife and I, I shouldn't keep saying me, add my wife and I to your prayer list, we would appreciate it.

Thank you. I think one of the great joys of life is to see young men and young women turning their lives over to the Lord for service, don't you? Young men and young women who've seen a vision and can no longer live for themselves and who feel that life is worse than worthless unless they give all. I tell you, that's one of the great joys of living for me.

And it's wonderful that in a day like this, God is really working like that, and careers are going out the window in order to serve the wonderful Lord Jesus Christ. For a few minutes tonight, could we turn to 1 Corinthians 9, please? 1 Corinthians 9, I'd like to begin reading in verse 24. Here Paul says, No ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize, so run that ye may obtain.

And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run not as uncertainly, so fight I not as one that beateth the air, but I keep under my body and bring it into subjection, that by any means when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

You might put your finger on that last word, castaway. If you have another version of the Bible, it might have a different word there. It might say something different.

But that's the word I'd like to think with you about tonight. I myself should be a castaway. The dreadful possibility that any believer can be a castaway.

Now I'd like to say from the very outset that a passage like this has nothing to do with the doctrine of the eternal security of the believer. The scripture is very, very clear that no truly born-again person will ever perish. I think immediately of John chapter 10, 27 through 29, where Jesus said, My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me, and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish.

Neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father which gave them me is greater than all, and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. Praise God.

If any sheep of Christ ever perished, he would no longer be God. He'd have to get off his throne, because he said, They shall never perish. I never come to this passage of scripture without thinking of dear Dr. Ironside.

He was speaking on it one night, and a woman came steaming to him at the end of the meal. I don't know why so many people steamed to Dr. Ironside. He was such a gracious, godly man.

But this woman came up to him, and she said, I certainly don't agree with what you said tonight. And he said, What don't you agree with, madam? And she said, Well, that business of what's saved always saves. Well, he said, Let me quote you a verse of scripture.

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me, and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish. She said, I don't believe it the way you believe it. He said, Madam, let me quote it again to you.

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me, and I give unto them eternal life. She said, I don't believe it the way you believe it. He said, Madam, just let me quote it to you again.

He said, My sheep hear my voice. She said, Don't you quote that to me again. She said, I don't believe that the way you believe it.

He said, Madam, I haven't told you yet how I believe it. All he was doing was quoting the word of God. He didn't give any interpretation.

He was just letting the word speak for itself. And that's what Jesus said, the incarnate Son of God said, They shall never perish. John 3, 36, He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.

He that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him. Dear friends, if you lost that life, it wasn't everlasting life, was it? Whatever you lost, it wasn't everlasting. But Jesus said, He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.

Pretty strong, isn't it? Everlasting means exactly that. I like John 5, 24, of course, where Jesus said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word and believeth on him that sent me hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life. Pretty clear, isn't it? And then I like to turn over to Romans chapter 8, which is very, very strong on the eternal security of the believer.

And I'm just going to begin reading in verse 29, although I just want the last part of verse 30. It says in verse 29 of Romans 8, For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called, and whom he called them he also justified.

Notice, and whom he justified, them he also glorified. Dear friends, if in the history of the human race 10 billion people were justified, how many are going to be glorified? One left? No, no. Whom he justified, them he also glorified.

Now, most of us here tonight are justified by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. We're not glorified yet. You wouldn't have the rheumatism and arthritis if you were glorified.

But it's just as sure in the purposes of God as if it had already taken place, and God uses the past tense to describe it. Whom he justified, them he also glorified. And then in the last part of chapter 8, it's a beautiful thing to see the great apostle Paul ransacking the universe to see if he could find anything that would ever separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord, and he said, Nothing, for I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

When Christ saves a person, he saves him for all eternity. So, in coming to a passage of scripture like 1 Corinthians chapter 9, you have to distinguish between salvation and service. This passage of scripture is speaking about service, not about salvation.

The apostle Paul, the whole context of this area, this passage of the word of God, has to do with his service now that he has been saved by the marvelous grace of God. In coming to a passage of scripture like this, you have to distinguish between gift and reward, don't you? Salvation is a free gift of God's grace, quite apart from human works, good works, law-keeping, or anything else. Ah, but there are rewards

connected with Christian service.

But, I sometimes feel that when we come to a scripture like this, we spend all of our time saying that it doesn't affect the eternal security of the believer. In fact, we stand on our heads to emphasize that, and we forget to emphasize what the passage of scripture is really saying. And that's what I want to do tonight.

None of you should go away saying, McDonald doesn't believe in the eternal security of the believer. I certainly do with all my heart. But I want to tell you, this passage of scripture has a very solemn message for you and me.

You know what it says? It says it's possible for our souls to be saved and our lives to be lost. It's possible to be fit for heaven through the merit of the Lord Jesus Christ, and unfit for further testimony on earth. Well, that's solemn, isn't it? Which is, to me, castaway, lest having preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

It's possible to be disqualified. It's possible to be rejected, to be disapproved from present testimony with loss of future reward. That's what Paul is saying here.

This passage of scripture points up the need for self-discipline. That's what it does. It points up the need for self-discipline.

You know, God wants us to be holy. I'll never get famous for saying that. God wants us to be holy, but God will not make me holy without my cooperation.

I know there is a brand of theology today, and I think they call it the faith rest life. And you'd almost think that all you have to do is lean back in your lazy boy reclining chair and sip Cokes, and God will make you holy. It won't work.

It won't work. Nobody's going to be made holy without his cooperation with the Lord in the matter. And that might involve saying no 10,000 times every week.

That's what Paul is talking about here. Listen to the way Phillips paraphrases this. I like it.

He says, I run the race then with determination. I am no shadow boxer. I really fight.

I am my body's sternest master for fear that when I have preached to others, I should myself be disqualified. And then today's English version, which I don't necessarily recommend for study Bible, but it's good for reading. It says, that is why I run straight for the finish line.

That is why I am like a boxer who does not waste his punches. I like that. That is why I am like a boxer who does not waste his punches.

I harden my body with blows and bring it under complete control to keep from being rejected myself after having called others to the contest. That's good. And that's exactly what it says in the original language of the New Testament.

I pummel my body. And it's speaking about the enormous self-discipline that the Apostle Paul had to exercise. After all, if anybody was ever a target of the devil, it would be Paul.

Just think what a victory it would have been for Satan if he could have laid him low, caught him in immorality, brought disgrace upon the name of the Lord. He says here, in a very interesting verse, it says, Everyone that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Everyone that striveth.

And the word there for striveth is the word that we get agonizes from. That's good. Everyone that agonizes for the mastery.

Dear friends, I want to tell you, it takes an agony today, in the world that we live in, to go on triumphantly for the Lord. It takes agony in prayer. It takes agony in self-discipline.

Everyone that agonizes for the mastery is temperate in all things. It's interesting to me that in this lovely passage of Scripture, Paul uses three sports. He uses running.

And I don't suppose we can read this passage without thinking about the Olympics last summer. And just think of how those runners disciplined themselves, huh? Very disciplined. They didn't get that way by just sitting around and eating french fries from McDonald's, did they? No.

They had to exercise discipline over their food, over their sleep, over their exercise, over every part of their life. Paul says, Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize. Then he also uses wrestling.

In fact, that word I use, everyone that agonizes for the mastery, that's wrestling that he has in view there. And then he uses boxing. I make every blow count.

I'm not beating the air. Very graphic, isn't it? I think it is. He pummeled his body to bring it into subjection.

Years ago, there was a man, preacher in Pittsburgh, I think. His name was Sam Shoemaker. And he wrote this.

He said, Most of us fight a dreary battle for character, or else give it up entirely, and just give in to the desire that assails us, desires to coddle and indulge the body. Isn't that true? Desires to coddle and indulge the body. To please and amuse the mind.

To fritter away the life with trivial pursuits. That was written before the game came out, Trivial Pursuits. This was written in 1965.

Maybe that's where they got the word from. To win out over somebody else to get ours. The way to deal with sin is not to hate sin more, but to love Christ more.

He makes the battle seem worthwhile. He gives us help directly and through the church in winning it. And then he, quote, stuttered Kennedy as saying, and I like this, that it takes a passion to conquer a passion, and it does.

It takes a passion to conquer a passion. And if I just coddle the body, pamper it, give in to every appetite of the body, I'll never make history for God. Now, Christ is the only passion great enough to make me want to overcome my sin.

There's not a sin in the catalog which he has not helped somebody to overcome. The Lord Jesus emphasized this in his teaching in Mark chapter 9. You remember he said, if your eye offends you, pluck it out. If your hand, right hand, offends you, cut it off.

If your right leg offends you, cut it off. Better to go into life maimed than having all your members to be cast into hell. Is that what he said? What did he mean by that? Did he mean that Christians should actually maim their bodies literally? No, he didn't say that.

He said it would be better. You know, by the power of the Spirit of God, it doesn't have to be done. But what it says to me is this.

I have to exercise discipline over my eyes, the things that I see, the desires of life. I have to exercise discipline on my hands, the things that I do. I have to exercise discipline over my feet, the places that I go.

What we do, where we go, what we crave after. That's what he was talking about there. And he was telling us in the strongest possible words, words so that we never forget it.

That's why the Lord used that vigorous speech known as hyperbole. He's saying it in an obviously exaggerated way to fix it in our minds that we would never forget it. He's saying, look, you've got to exercise discipline.

I have to exercise discipline in sleep. How many have fallen this way? Discipline in the sex life. When I think of the church today and what's happening in the church today, I feel this is where Satan is getting his greatest victories.

David. David is an illustration of the time when kings went off to war. David didn't go off to war.

He stayed and pampered himself. That's what he did. And he fell into sin and committed adultery and murder, caused the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme.

And they're still blaspheming today. David. David.

Man after God's own heart. That's what a believer's like. I'd rather have my dog.

That's what they're saying today. He caused the enemies of God to blaspheme. A moment of passion.

Dear friend, it's possible to ruin a whole life in a moment of passion. We have to exercise discipline over our food. I think of Esau.

He came in and he was hungry. And a great storyteller he was. And he saw that, what was it, chili beans? Something like that.

It was either a red soup or a red bean dish. That's what I want. I'm going to die anyway.

And what good would a birthright be to a dying man? He valued that bowl of chili more than his birthright. The birthright would have given him spiritual headship in the family. The birthright would have put him in the line of the Messiah.

Really, you know? He had no value. What good is that? I'm going to die. He wasn't going to die.

After all, he ate the bowl of mush. And he was hungry four hours later. What a bad bargain it was.

But I want to tell you, people are making that bargain today just for that momentary satisfaction of an appetite of bargaining away the birthright. We have to exercise discipline over our time, over our minds, living in a world of fantasy. James tells us very clearly, I think, in his letter that it all begins in the mind.

And you live in a world of fantasy. And if you think a thing long enough, sooner or later you're going to do it. That's rather sobering, isn't it? You think about a thing long enough.

He compares it to a birth of the baby, you know. Conception, birth, growth, death. That's it.

It all takes place in the human mind. We have to avoid living in a world of fantasy. Our whole lifestyle.

I was reading recently, and the writer spoke about the soft and effeminate luxuries that kill the soul. Boy, what a statement. The soft and effeminate luxuries that kill the soul.

I like this quote. It says, in every man there's a weak spot, which if he is not on the watch can ruin him. Somewhere in every man there's the flaw, some fault of temperament which can ruin life, some instinct or passion so strong that it may at any time snap the leash.

Some quirk in our makeup that makes what is a pleasure to someone else a menace to us. We should realize it and be on the watch. Let me give you some examples of what Paul is talking about here.

One of the best known Christian organizations in the United States. If I mentioned the name, I think everyone would have heard it. Very prominent Christian man heading up the organization.

Once again, most of you here would be familiar with the name if I mentioned it. Those who worked with him noticed, they began to notice that there were some things in his life that were not Christlike. But you know, nobody dared to say anything to him because the work, the blessing of God was so manifestly upon that work.

Nobody went to him, nobody raised a warning flag to him. And he plunged on and on and on. And went over into the precipice of immorality.

And he's living in obscurity in Switzerland today. You never hear his name. That's what Paul was talking about.

One of the leading evangelicals in the United States. Paul says, lest having preached to others, I myself should be a castaway. I think of a man I know personally.

And he became covetous. He was involved in several different kinds of businesses and some of them were speculative. He had a lust to get rich quick.

And things started going bad and he started to juggle his accounts. A little hanky-panky in the bookkeeping department of his businesses. He had borrowed money from relatives and friends all in the surrounding area.

And then one of his employees turned him in to the authorities. Name splashed over the headlines. Six months in jail.

Testimony gone. Friends gone. I couldn't begin to tell you the bitterness, the conflict, the strife among those who had lost the money.

What was it? Covetousness. He had preached to others. He had carried on a very good prison work, if I may say so.

Going down and talking to them. Pretty soon he was in prison himself. He didn't exercise self-discipline in that area.

I think of another brother and I know every one of you. Well, any one of you who's been saved for very long would know him, would know the name. Internationally known.

He started taking a little wine. You know, just a little wine. A social drink.

But it didn't stop there. It kept going deeper and deeper. He died under a cloud.

He was on the shelf as far as service for God was concerned. What about his salvation? I believe he's in heaven today on the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ. Cast away.

On the shelf. Makes me think of an elder in an assembly in the Midwest who handled the bread and the wine after the service. And if there was some wine left in the cup, he drank it.

He died a drunkard. That's what Paul was talking about in this passage of Scripture. I lived in the Chicago area for a good many years and there was a radial personality there, a Christian man.

Everybody loved him. I've known few men who really were so greatly beloved as this man. But he had one bad failing.

He couldn't keep his hands off the women. Blotto. On the shelf.

He preached to others so effectively. He called others to the race. He himself was disqualified.

Still living. He's no longer a power for God. And I could give you other illustrations.

It's too sad. It's just too heartbreaking. There's a hymn.

One of the loveliest hymns in church, Hymns of the Faith. And one of the most spiritual hymns, too. I'm not going to tell you which one, because then you could know the author's name.

That man failed to exercise discipline. You know where they found him? Down in a mission on the Bowery in New York. That's where they found him.

But praise God, there was restoration for him to an extent. 1 John 1.9 is still in the book. If we confess our sins, he's faithful and just.

Forgive us our sins, that it cleanse us from all unrighteousness. And he did. He came back to the Lord, and he confessed his sins, and he was forgiven.

And that can happen. Those sins are washed away in the blood of Christ. But I'm going to tell you something.

The consequences of our sins stay with us, don't they? And he could never, never, never have the place of ministry he had before. Couldn't do it. And I think that's in accordance with the Word of God.

Now, in closing, just look at our passage of Scripture again. It says, Know ye not that they which run in a race run all but one receiveth the prize. That doesn't mean that only one Christian can receive the prize, does it? That would be terrible.

What does it mean? It means so run that you obtain. That's what it means. Run as if you are out after the prize.

Press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. And it says, Everyone that agonizes in the games is temperate in all things. I tell you, I respect those young people that were running in the Olympics and in other events.

They did it to obtain a corruptible crown, and we an incorruptible. When I was a boy, my dad used to take my brother and myself to watch the marathon in Boston. You remember him saying, You know, it would kill a horse to run 26 miles.

Look at those men coming in. And we'd be down there at the finish line, and we'd watch Clarence DeMar come in, and they would put a laurel wreath around his head. You know, just a wreath of laurels.

I wonder where they are today. I wonder if they've gone to the Salvation Army or Goodwill, or are they just rotting away in some attic today. They do it to obtain a corruptible crown.

But we an incorruptible. I, therefore, so run not as uncertainly, so fight I not as one that beateth the air. But I keep under my body, and bring it as a subjection, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

You say, Why are you talking about this Sunday night at Fayetteville? You know, we ought to pray for one another. We really should. I tell you, the devil is after every one of us.

Do you ever pray for Billy Graham? Do you ever think what would happen if the devil got the advantage over that dear man? I tell you, we ought to pray for him. Pray for men who are in the public eye, servants of the Lord. You know, the devil doesn't waste his gunpowder on nominal Christians, does he? But on those who are out in the front lines for the Lord.

I think the greatest thing any Christian could do for me would be to pray that God's preserving power will keep me to the end. I can't think of anything better than that. I remember when F.C. Jennings had his 100th birthday, Alpen Food Magazine, they had a little celebration for him, and they asked him to speak.

And all he did was extol the grace of God that had kept him for a hundred years. That's what we want, isn't it? Pray for one another. Pray for those prominent in Christian work.

Keep under the body. Bring it into subjection, but having preached to others, you and I might yet be cast away. Shall we pray? Father, we realize that sometimes you speak to us very solemnly through the word, and I feel you've spoken to my heart tonight, and I pray that other hearts might be affected, too.

I think of young people going out to the mission field, facing pressures, oppression, satanic opposition there that perhaps they'd never faced in this country. Oh, God, just for your keeping power. If you don't keep us, we won't be kept.

But help us, oh God, to cooperate. Help us in this area of agonizing in self-discipline. Help us to pummel the body.

Help us not to be shadowboxing, to run uncertainly, to press with steady gait toward the mark for the prize. We ask it in Jesus' name, and for his sake. Amen.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/17/SID17532.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/william-macdonald/self-control-or-castaways-missions-conf-1985/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net