

Marathon Youth Rally 2018 Devotional

Friday: Carb Up

John 6:35 NRSV

³⁵ Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty."

John 6:51 NRSV

⁵¹ I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh."

Just as running a marathon often begins with eating lots of carbs, like bread and pasta, in order to provide your body enough energy to run such a long and grueling race, so too do we have to put our whole faith in the Bread of Life, Jesus Christ so that we might begin the race of faith to eternal life.

Romans 3:23 NRSV says, "All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of the God."

We are desperately in need of someone to save us from our sin and the scriptures also provide the solution to our problem.

Romans 5:8 NRSV says, "While we were yet sinners Christ died for us."

Christ is the solution to our sin problem. It is he who is the source of our hope for a future.

Romans 6:23 NRSV says, "The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

In Jesus Christ we are promised eternal life.

Romans 10:13 NRSV says, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

These scriptures that show us the path to salvation are called Romans Road. Romans Road gives us clear direction for our life – that we must run to Jesus Christ so that we might be saved from our sin. Make the choice to choose Christ, the Bread of Life, so that you might find yourself on the path of salvation.

Questions for Discussion

1. Why do we need a savior?
2. What is sin?
3. How is Jesus's death and resurrection the solution to our sin problem?
4. Do you think salvation is a one-time experience or a journey?
5. Why do you think Jesus is described as the "Bread of Life"?

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Saturday: Pace Yourself

Romans 8:38-39 NRSV

³⁸For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

After you have Carbed-Up and devoted your life to Jesus, you will experience peaks and valleys in your life. Peaks are moments in your life where your spiritual relationship with Jesus is at a high, whereas valleys are low moments in your life where your relationship with Jesus might be tested. Moments like these are expected in your walk with God, but God will not let you be tested beyond your ability (read 1 Corinthians 10:13).

In Romans 8:38-39, Paul writes to the church in Rome to encourage them to put God first in their life and not let other things get in the way. Money, clothes, celebrities, fame, or power are a few things that tempt people and lead them away from God. In order to stay connected to God, we as disciples can be obedient, diligent, and committed. Even though there will be peaks and valleys in your walk with God, He will be with you from the moment you Carb-Up to the moment you finish your race.

Questions for Discussion

1. Share one high or low from your life with your group. Did you turn to God in your situation?
2. What does obedience mean to you? What does diligence mean to you? What does commitment mean to you?
3. How can you hold yourself and others to obedience, diligence, and commitment?
4. Read 1 Corinthians 9:24-25. What is perishable wealth versus imperishable wealth?
5. How do we, as disciples, train in order to finish our race with God?

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Sunday: Finish the Race

Yesterday, we learned how to maintain our personal relationship with God throughout all of the highs and the lows of our faith marathon. However, as the Youth Rally comes to a close and we go back into the broken world, God has entrusted us with the most important task on Earth:

*¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ 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, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."
(Matthew 28:18-20 NRSV)*

As we journey through life, we need to go out into the world and finish strong the race that God has given us by making disciples and spreading the good news of the Gospel wherever we go. This task, the Great Commission, is the most important task that we will have in our lifetime. As we, ourselves, become disciples, we must make our own goals align with God's and repurpose our lives to spread the word of Jesus, as the disciples did when Jesus said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fish for people."
(Matthew 4:19 NRSV)

We should all become fishers of people, finding opportunities in our lives to spread the Word. We are all surrounded by people in need of the Gospel: In our jobs, in school, and even in our homes and communities. As we align our goals with God's, our number one priority should be to offer salvation to people. As Paul stated in Acts 20:24, "However, I consider my life worth nothing to me; my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me -- the task of testifying to the good news of God's Grace."

Questions for Discussion

1. What is God's number one goal for us as disciples?
2. What is the Great Commission asking us to do?
3. How can we be "fishers of people"?
4. How can you apply the Great Commission to your own life?