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U Got Game



The BIG IDEA: This series explores how God has designed each of us to be on the mission of a lifetime. With sports analogies as the backdrop, we will explore the broad scope of the mission and the unique part we each have been invited to play in “the Game”.

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How to use this document

Community Christian Church has collaboration in its DNA. Our messages / talks / sermons are developed and refined over eight weeks by a team of six to eight teaching and lead pastors in our NewThing Network (www.newthing.org). We do a lot of research, and wrestle together over what makes it in to our talks. Each teaching pastor also spends time to personalize the message for themselves. We hope you will take the time to do the same – to wrestle with the main theme of the message and make these messages your own.

These are four questions that we almost always ask regarding any talk we craft as a team:

Question 1: **"What?"** - This is simply asking, "What is it that you are talking about?" This is an important question because it is very easy to talk about more than one thing. We have followed Haddon Robinson's teaching of always sticking to one BIG IDEA. The BIG IDEA is how we answer the "What?" question.

Question 2: **"So what?"** - The second question is asking, "So what makes this topic such a big deal that people ought to pay attention to you?" What are you going to say in the next thirty minutes that warrants the attention of hundreds, or thousands, of listeners?

Question 3: **"Now what?"** - This question is the application question. This question will generally be answered with something you want people to do, think or feel differently after hearing this talk.

Question 4: **"Where is Jesus in it?"** - We want our teaching to always be Christo-centric and by asking, "Where is Jesus in this talk?" we never leave out the obvious.

We have formatted this transcript as a resource for teaching pastors to take notes to the right of the text during message preparation. When our teaching pastors have finalized their transcripts, and added personal stories of their own, they usually format the document they use during message delivery in 18pt type 1.5 row spaced, set top, bottom, left, and right margins at 0.5 inches, and include page numbers on the bottom. They use highlighters, and mark up their final document with underlines, etc.

Example:

"We would line up in the gym, our sneakers nudging a stretch of red tape that marked the boundaries of the elementary school basketball court. Across from us, team captains took turns calling out names: the chosen ones, the first picks. The ones who were picked first swaggered over and faced us. They whispered friends' names in the captain's ear.

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The Draft

The BIG IDEA:

God picks each of us to be part of what He is up to in the world - to be part of His team.



Message

Throughout my life I have had the privilege of going to many different professional sporting events. I have seen the Bulls beat the Lakers, I have seen the Cowboys take on the Eagles in Monday night football, I have seen the Cubs play a zillion times (and actually win twice), and I have seen the White Sox play (along with the other three fans they had before winning the World Series), and I have even seen the Blackhawks score a last second goal to win in Overtime. Each time went to a professional game I was enthralled by the masses of people. It's amazing to watch the different types of human beings who frequent these sporting events. During the game, I love to look around and check out all the beer-bellied males screaming at the top of their lungs, cursing and booing with nacho cheese dripping off of their goatees. In essence, they are saying that they can pass better, swing the bat better, tackle better, run better, and even coach better than even some of the greatest professional athletes in the world—guys who move at warp speed, guys who can hit like a Mack truck.

The group that was doing all the booing, ladies, were the guys who always tell you, "You know, I'd be a professional athlete today if I hadn't blown my knee out in the ninth grade." [Possibly show clip from Napoleon Dynamite with the Uncle talking about his High School football days]. No, you wouldn't. It's a pipe dream. Let's face it, though, a lot of us have fantasized about playing for our favorite sports team. But deep down the truth is very real. We are not good enough. Sure there are those who do make it, but for the large majority of us, we are never good enough to step out of the stands and onto the fields of Americas biggest sports venues. The large majority of us will never be drafted.

As you read in the New Testament, as you look for a description of the Christian life, one of the most used metaphors to describe our faith is an athletic contest. It's a game. But make no

mistake about it the Bible is very clear in its challenge for you to step out of the stands and onto the field of faith. The marquee game is played within the confines of the local church. Over the next four weeks—I am so fired up about this—we are going to look at something called GAME. The question we are going to ask ourselves repeatedly in this series is, “You Got Game?”

M1: God Chooses Those Who are Not Good Enough

If you are going to get in the game, you must first be drafted. Now this is the roughest time of any kickball game for an unathletic third grader. But there I was out on the playground with the other kids at Ridgecrest Elementary school. Now I was a pretty athletic kid, but I was such a runt. It did not matter how good I really was, I looked as if I could not compete with the other kids. So you know the drill, the two best kids are chosen to be team captains and the nightmare begins. One by one kids are getting “drafted” onto one of the teams. The pool from which to draft new team members begins to shrink with every minute. And without fail I found myself without a team when it came down to two people who were still undrafted. That’s when my prayer life kicked it up a notch, “Please Lord, don’t let me get picked last.” I mean there is nothing worse in all the world than getting picked last...oh, wait there is. The worst thing that could ever happen is when you are last and defaulted to one team. But then the captain of that team says, “We don’t want him...you can have him.” Is it really possible? Do I sip so bad that I cannot even be drafted by default? No matter how good I ended up playing in the playground kickball game, it was hard for me to get over the feeling that I was “not good enough.” The feeling of inadequacy was gripping.

But as I begin to look onto the field of faith, it seems as though God is drafting those who are not good enough. God is drafting those who appear to be totally inadequate. He pursues a guy named Noah and tells him to build a big boat in preparation of a flood. Noah was not a carpenter much less a sea captain. He was not adequate for the task, but he did have a faith in God. God called up a guy named Moses who had lived in exile for about 40 years. He was not a very good communicator (some even suggest that he may have had a speech impediment); yet God told him that he was going to approach Pharaoh (the most powerful leader in the land) and demand that the Egyptians free their slaves. God sought after a young shepherd boy named David to take on a giant. David was not a trained fighter or a skilled warrior, but he did have a big faith in God. I am not sure

that I really understand why, but it seems that God is always favoring the underdog (that's why I know God is really a Cub fan). He is drafting those that the world deems inadequate to play on the field of faith. As you move into the second part of the Bible (the New Testament) Jesus picks up right where God had left off. At the age of about 30, Jesus recruits his 12 disciples. You would think that Jesus might go after the most talented, the most influential, the most popular guys in all the nation. After all, these were the guys that would change the course of history. But once again, Jesus drafted the rif-raf of society...those who were the outcasts. He drafted some fishermen, a tax collector, and formed a group of nobodys. God is in the business of drafting those who are not good enough...those who feel totally inadequate.

This is not just a Bible thing. God is still drafting those onto the field of faith today. But many say, "I am not good enough. I have made too many mistakes. God does not want me." Others think, "The work of God is just reserved for those who are perfect." But hear this very clearly, God wants to draft you into his work. God wants to draft you into this thing called ministry. Don't let that word scare you. I know the word ministry can carry a bit of baggage. It really is about one thing. Look at Jesus' words in the book of Matthew.

Matthew 20:26, "Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant."

Matthew 20:28, "[Jesus] did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Ministry is all about serving. And God is drafting you into works of service that will impact the church and the world around us. You should get involved in ministry because you've been drafted. I've been drafted. Just think about it. You are God's man. You are God's woman. He's watched you. He's had his eye on you. You're one-of-a-kind. You're unique. You are looking at the greatest [Shawn Williams] you know why? I am the only one. I am currently looking at the greatest [list a few students by name] you know why. You are the only one like you. When I get to heaven, God's not going to say, "Hey, Shawn, why weren't you more like Brad Prunty? Why weren't you more like Nick Plassman? Why weren't you more like...." He's going to say, "Shawn, why weren't you more like you?" He'll say the same thing to you. So, you be you. If you aren't you, there's going to

be a hole in history, a gap in creativity, a missing link within the body of Christ.

Ephesians 2:10 says, “For we are God’s workmanship created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” We are God’s Number 1 pick. God has been preparing a good work of service for each and every one of us. I hope you heard that phrase “to do,” “to do.” The Christian life, ministry, is about ACTION, ACTION, God wants you to be active in the acts of service he has prepared for you. What active things are you doing for God? You’ve been drafted. Maybe for you, the very first action you need to take is to say “yes” to God. For others, you have said “yes” to God but you have not yet come to the place where you are living out your faith in a real way.

M2: God believes in us even when we don’t believe in ourselves.

One of my favorite stories in the Bible is a story with Jesus and his disciples. After a long day together, Jesus sends his disciples out on a lake in a small wooden boat. Apparently, it was not all too uncommon for a storm to brew up in an instant on this lake. And that is exactly what happened. The disciples are out on a small boat when the winds began to pick up and the waves began to rise. Before they could get back to shore they found themselves being tossed around in a brutal storm. Now if they were not already freaked out enough, what they saw next would have made me wet myself. They see out on the water a figure moving toward them on top of the water. Was it a ghost? Are we hallucinating? But Peter was the first to recognize who was making his way to the boat. It was Jesus literally placing one foot in front of the other walking on the surface of the water. And in this moment, Peter does the unthinkable. Peter jumps out of the boat and begins to walk on the water to Jesus. I am not sure how many steps that he took, but at some point reality hit him in the face. I AM WALKING ON THE STINKIN WATER!!! And like any of us would, Peter was flooded with feelings of doubt. He can’t really do this. Right? Peter’s doubt consumed him and he began to sink into the water. Thankfully, Jesus stuck out his hand and pulled him up to safety. But the words of Jesus have always struck me weird. He says to Peter, “You of little faith. Why did you doubt?” (Matthew 14:31). I have always thought that Jesus was a bit harsh. I am thinking, Peter must have had a tremendous faith in Jesus order to even take one step out of the boat. Why would Jesus question Peter’s faith in him? But then I was challenged by a guy named Rob Bell who

made me look at this story a bit differently. Bell suggests that Peter was not doubting Jesus. Instead, Peter came to a crossroads where he doubted himself. And there in the water, Jesus is saying, "Peter why are you doubting yourself." Don't you know, I believe in you! The King of Kings and the Lord of Lords believes in you! In the New Testament, Jesus calls us to be like Him. Do you think that he would call us to be like him unless he really believed that we could do it? With God's help, you can do it! He does believe in you.

I think of all the times I have been in this situation. I feel like I am in a place where I want to serve and I want to make a big impact, but I find that I doubt myself. I doubt my abilities. I doubt my leadership capability. I doubt that I am really making a difference. I doubt that I should be doing what I am doing. There must be someone better at this than me. But it is in these moments that I hear these words of Jesus ring true in my life, "Shawn, why are you doubting. I believe in you." And to everyone in this room understand this very clearly. God wants to draft you into ministry...into the work of serving others. And God will always believe in you, even when you do not believe in yourself.

Conclusion

So now the choice is yours. You have been drafted by God into ministry. You have been drafted by God to serve his church and the world. Now that you have been drafted what are you going to do! Remember, ministry is not about talk...it is about action. I am always perplexed every year following the NFL draft. You have a number of players who were selected in the first round that appear so excited on draft day. They hear their name called and jump up from their chair hugging all those around them. They immediately get on their cell phone and share the excitement with friends and family. They pose for the cameras as they are handed their new team's jersey. Then something happens. After the excitement of the draft day has worn off, some players decide to do the unthinkable. They choose to hold out. They choose to not show up for practice. They choose to not join the team. They choose to stay away from the field holding out for money.

I know that on the field of faith we are not holding out for more money, but I am equally as baffled by the number of people that have been drafted that never step on the field of faith. Whether you are a follower of Jesus or not yet, I would love for you to ask yourself the simple question, "What is preventing me from

stepping on the field of faith and making a difference in the lives of others.”

Here at the Yellow Box we have just created a new opportunity for students. We have put together a group of students who is committed to influencing and owning what happens here at Student Community. This team is now meeting together at 2:30pm on Sundays. We are dreaming together, having fun together, planning together, creating together, and serving together so that Student Community can continually be a place where anyone can come, feel accepted, and learn about the love of God. These students are beginning to design the environment, create a welcoming atmosphere, run the tech and arts equipment, organize material for our small groups. These students are coming together and will change the culture of Student Community. But Student Community will not flourish until more students step out of the stands and onto the field of faith. Anyone in this room is invited to join us next week at 2:30pm.

You have been drafted. It is time for you to show the world that U Got Game!

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The Skills

The BIG IDEA: God not only drafts us to be on His team, but He also has in mind for us particular positions to play based on the abilities, gifts, and resources He gives each of us.



Message

It is good to see everyone here tonight. We are continuing our series where we are asking the all important question, U Got Game? We are looking at what it means to step onto the field of faith and be apart of God's mission. For those of you who joined us last week, you realized that you have been drafted. Every single person in this room has been individually selected to become apart of God's team. If you have not yet made the decision to be on the team, we hope that this series will help you discover a God that is passionate about you and very passionate to have you playing on his team.

As I think about playing on God's team I begin to think about all the great athletes that have stepped on the basketball court, baseball diamond, or football field. Take just a quick minute and think about the great athletes of our time. In your mind, who do you think is the greatest? [Pause to let them think]. You got it. What makes them the greatest? [Pause again] Alright. Take a quick minute and share who you think is the greatest with your neighbor. Also share what makes them great. [If you have time, you can take a few responses from a few students in the audience].

Regardless of who you think is the all time greatest, there are certain attributes that make athletes great. It is their unbelievable quickness. It is their relentless pursuit of victory. It is their unshakable poise in pressure situations. And I think that we would all agree that these people have some mad skills. At times they leave us speechless when they make an unbelievable play. I think of Michael Jordan's last second shot that won the Bulls an NBA championship. I think of the Willie Mays over the head catch in the World Series. I think of Tom Brady's comebacks that put his team in a position to win three of the last four Super Bowls. And I think of I think to myself, "How did they do that." They are able to do things that no other human being can do. And I even get a bit jealous at times, if only I had skills like that.

Movement 1: Realize that You Have Been Given a Skill

Now it is true. I will never be able to shoot a basketball like Michael Jordan. And I will never be able to throw a football like Tom Brady. And I may never be able to play ping-pong like the Japanese, but I have skills. I have mad skills. And so do you!! Whether it is numb chuck skills or computer hacking skills, you've got some stuff given to you from God Himself. God calls these special skills or talents "gifts." And he has given you skills to make you an All-Star on His team.

Now do not miss this: each of us has a gift. Every person in this room...whether you are a Freshman or a Senior...whether you are a boy or girl...whether you are here for the first time or been coming for ages...every single person in this room has a gift. You have a skill or a set of skills that have been given to you by God. This skill or gift is not something you can buy. You can't obtain it through any other means. Romans 12:6 states, "We have different gifts, according to the grace given us." Each person is given a gift that is specifically designed to be used by you for a specific purpose. Every person here who has accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord has everything that is needed to fulfill God's purpose for your life. You possess it right now. Everything you need for God's success and purpose is inside of you.

Movement 2: Discover Your Specific Skills

But it is one thing to know that you have a gift, but it is another to discover what you are gifted at. Have you ever wondered about how you are supposed to discover your gift? You are all sitting here on a mountain of "charisma" that God has placed in you for the purpose of his supernatural mission on planet Earth. But how do you discover what it is?

Look at your passions: One of the first things that you can look at is your own heart. Ask yourself, "What makes me most excited in life? What are the things that give me energy and fulfillment? What are the things that you cannot imagine yourself NOT doing? More than likely these are the very things that you are most passionate about. Many times our passions are very closely linked to our gifts.

Assess what you are good at: Next, you need to take a close look at the things that you feel like you are good at. We are naturally drawn to the activities we excel at. For example,

Tanner is a great athlete. He is one of the fastest guys at his school. It is no wonder that he is drawn to track because this is a place that he excels. Jamie is a very outgoing girl who loves the theater. People continue to tell her how well she performs in the school play. If you have a hard time nailing down what you are good at, you might ask those closest to you what they see as your strengths.

Discover by doing:

Though your passions are important and your experience is helpful, you will most often discover your skills by doing. That's right, you will discover what you are good at by stepping onto the field of faith and trying out at a position. Hear me very clearly, there is nothing that says you must discover your gift before you go serve. Instead, you should serve...and as you serve...you will unwrap whatever gift God has placed inside of you. Now you may discover as many things that you are not gifted as you also discover the things that you are. This is OK. It is OK to try a few positions out to learn about how you were wired up by God. It is just very important that you do not give up and keep trying until you discover your skills. There is a position on the team for you!

I often wonder where I would be if I never stepped onto the field of faith just to try, fail, and discover. I remember that I was a Sophomore in High School when I gave my first public speech. I was petrified. There was nothing in the world that I dreaded more than talking in front of people. But nevertheless I joined our High School speech team because a good friend of mine was on it. At first it was incredibly rocky. I was horrible. But slowly I begin to gain confidence, overcome my fear, and actually enjoy speaking in front of people. The more that I did it the better I seemed to get until I finally realized that it was a skill (gift) that God had given me. I never would have discovered the gift without trying.

Many of you also know Brian Prunty. For those who do, you know that he is an amazing musician. Did you know that he has never taken a lesson? Actually, he never picked up a guitar until he was in college. But one day he picked up the instrument and discovered that he had a natural skill (gift).

Romans 12:6-8 says, "We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if

it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.”

Movement 3: Use Your Skills for Others

Though God has given us all skills, just discovering the gift is not enough. God has given each of us a gift (or many gifts) for a very specific purpose.

1 Peter 4:10 says. “Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.”

According to this passage, the purpose of this gift is to serve others so you can make an eternal impact. You have this gift for the purpose of blessing and benefiting other people. Gifts are always for the purpose of blessing and benefiting other people." So if you are a great teacher, it is not for your sake. You were not given this gift so that others will think that you are great. If you are great relationally with people, it is not just for your sake so that you can have a lot of friends. If you are a gifted musician, it is not just for your sake. You were not given this gift so that you could use your talent to woo a member of the opposite sex.

NO! Every single gift that God has given to us is for the sole purpose of serving others and sharing God's grace with them. Some of you are great with kids and actually plan to become teachers and work with them for your career some day. But God wants to use this gift now! He has given you that gift so that you can plug into Kid's City and help care for kids. Some of you are gifted relationally and God wants to use this gift now to help create an inviting and welcoming environment for students starting today. Some of you are gifted organizationally and God wants to use your skill to help coordinate and plan many of the events we do each year. Some of you are gifted in leadership and God wants to use your skill in a junior high small group. Some of you are gifted servants and God wants to use your skill to run all the “behind the scenes” things that make Student Community happen.

I think that you get the picture. God wired you up with skills to truly bless other people. Now some of you in this room are still checking us out and do not yet know if you want to be apart of this church thing. That's cool, we are glad you are here. But even if you are just checking it all out, one of the best ways to

seek out your spiritual questions is to step on the field. You do not have to figure it all out to get involved. I personally experience the most growth and challenge when I engage, get involved, and begin to use my gifts to serve others. Regardless where you are in your spiritual journey, you will want to begin using your skills. Now if you are a follower of Christ, you really do not have a choice. If we're not using our skill set within the context of the local church, we are missing it. If we're not using our stuff, we're just taking up space. A non-participating, non-serving Christian is an oxymoron (I think that is a fun word to say). So what are you waiting for. It is time for you to try out a position on the field. It is time for you to begin to discover you gifts. It is time for you to serve. If you are currently not serving somewhere and are looking to explore a few options, I would encourage you to join us at 3:00pm next week as a group of students gets together to serve one another. No excuses. It is time for you to step on the field. Because I know that... U Got Game!

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The Game Plan

The BIG IDEA:

The goal of the team is to change the world, to help people everywhere find their way back to God. That's the game plan.



Message

It is good to have everyone here at Student Community tonight. Tonight is a very special night as we continue our series called "U Got Game." Tonight we are going to test our small groups to see whether or not U Got Game. Tonight we are going to step on the playing field together. Tonight we are going to serve God by helping others around us.

Now many of you have been apart of a sports team at some point in your life. And you know that there are two critical times for a coach to deliver words of inspiration: before the game and at half time. It is here that the coach rallies the team together and gives his players a motivational locker room talk hoping to propel them to success on the field. It is here that the coach charges his team to "leave it all on the field." He tells them to "stop at nothing short of victory." He reminds them that the critical time for accomplishing anything is in the here and now. Now is the opportunity of success. Now is the time to give it your best. Now is the time to do what you have been preparing so hard to do.

It is interesting to me that Jesus rallied his followers together in a similar fashion. He gave them his own locker room speech. Jesus' locker room happened to be the side of a mountain where he actually delivered his final words to them. He tells them to leave it all on the field. He no doubt reminded them that they had been preparing for this day for a long time. He had told them that they would be doing what he had been doing...but would do even greater things than Jesus (John 14:12). He commissioned them to literally change the world. The time is NOW. Now is the opportunity they had been waiting for. Now is the time to give it their best. He says in Acts 1:8, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Did you catch that? They were going to be Jesus' representatives on earth and continue Jesus' life-changing...world-changing mission. But Jesus gave them a specific game plan. They were to start in Jerusalem and then continue to move further out into the surrounding areas until they truly impacted the world. Judea was a neighboring land where many Jews lived. Samaria was a little further away from Jerusalem and was made of with people of a different nationality. But eventually, Jesus wanted his influence to spread to every nation, across every language barrier, and into the lives of people world-wide. It must have been an inspiring, motivating locker room talk from Jesus.

Now I picture that the followers of Christ to come together in a circle...throw their hands in the middle...for Peter to scream, "What time is it?"...and for all the others to scream at the top of their lungs, "Game Time, HUH!" If guess they could have shouted some thing else like, "Jesus Time" or Church Time" or "Change the World time." But no matter what they shouted, they no doubt walked away inspired to change the world.

And it is for this reason that I am very troubled by what took place. If you turn the pages of your Bible over a few pages to Acts chapter 8 you find some concerning words. Though it is only a few pages later, there may have actually 2 years pass since Jesus' locker room talk. And this is what it says, "On that day a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria." Did you catch where the apostles are? **THEY ARE STILL IN JERUSALEM!!** They have not moved! For whatever reason, they broke the huddle and did not move out of Jerusalem to begin this world-changing mission of Jesus.

Acts 1:8 through Acts 8:1 reminds us of something super-important about churches, humanly speaking. This story is our story. We have a tremendous tendency and propensity to stay. We're kind of the opposite of dogs. It's a pretty big challenge to teach a dog to "stay". Dogs are animals of movement, because they like to move and go after things that move, including their owners. So it's not easy to teach a dog to stay. But we're the opposite of dogs: staying is what we naturally do. Stay here, and have a nice church for ourselves. Stay here, and let whoever wants to join us come to us and then they can stay with us. Nobody has to tell us to "stay", because it's what we do best most naturally. This story from Acts 1:8 through 8:1 is our story

because we want to stay comfortable and stay where we are, stay fixated on ourselves and lose sight of the passion of the words of the locker room talk that Jesus gave right before the big game began.

But tonight we will not stay. Tonight we are going to move. We are going to move from this place and watch God move in the lives of those around us. We are going to be an extension of God's love into the lives of those who have need around this holiday season. God desires that we get into the game every day of our lives. And my prayer is that tonight would be a catalyst for change in our lives. May we not sit back and fail to engage in the mission of God. May we not turn our eyes away from the need to serve others around us. The time is NOW! Now is our opportunity to make a difference in the world. Now is the time to leave it all on the field.

[Divide the student up by their small groups. Provide them with a name, map, and phone number of the family they will serve. Challenge them to give generously so that they will be able to provide a HUGE blessing to the families. Instruct them to go to the store, buy all the food, and deliver it to the families. Encourage them to talk with and pray with the families that they go to.]

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The Dynasty

The BIG IDEA: The game that we've been drafted for, the mission we are called to use our skills in is a forever thing. It goes on and on, the ultimate dynasty.



Message

What comes to your mind when you hear the word dynasty? My guess is that athletes or sports teams is the first thing that many of you start thinking about. It's the same for me...except that it's not the professional athletes or sports teams that may come to your mind. For me I think about MHS, the only high school in the big metropolis of Macomb, IL. Now something you have to understand about smaller towns is that the community is driven by sports so much more so than what you would experience in a bigger city. When I moved up here to the suburbs it didn't take long for me to realize that it was so much harder to be a part of the sports teams here. There are so many people that try out and there are so many great athletes that most students have to find other extra curricular activities. Now I'm not saying that sports aren't a big deal around here...but the reality is that there are so many other things around here that unite the community. But in the big city of Macomb...it seemed like it was only sports.

I say all that because for me growing up in Macomb my life became about sports. I loved to practice. I loved to compete. I wanted so much to be the best at everything. And so I can remember whenever I would go to the high school basketball games as just a young kid and seeing the trophy cases and the awards and the hall of fame wall. I was probably around 8 or 9 years old. But of all the areas in my school that had awards I was always drawn to the wrestling wall. I would always stop and look at the pictures and read the stats of all the best wrestlers who had ever been through Macomb High School. I probably stopped and stared at the wall over hundred times anticipating and hoping that someday my name would be on that wall. And even better than that I hoped that my picture would join the other two guys who were already there who had placed at the state wrestling tournament. That was always that goal that I was shooting for and as I look back on it I realize that I wanted so much to be a part of a dynasty. I wanted so much to be known and remembered. I had always hoped that someday some little kid would look up at that wall and see my picture saying that someday they wanted to be as good as me.

Transition: I wanted my legacy to last far beyond when I left that high school.

MI: Temporary vs. Eternal Dynasty

But today as I think about it all I keep asking my self this question: What really makes a dynasty worth it? I never did get my picture on the wall of Macomb High School. Yeah...I know, we can all take a second to be sad for me. I don't really like to talk about how my state tournament ended my senior year. I did though get my name up on the board as 1 of only 3 people in the history of MHS to win over 100 varsity matches in their 4 year high school career. I finished my career with 108 wins. Much of that was because I was able wrestle varsity as a freshman only because I was the only person on the team small enough to wrestle in the 103 pound weight class. Anyway...here's my point. Do you know how many times I have received a phone call or been in the news or received an email about how someone just saw my name on that board? Or do you know how many times people from Macomb have called me up to talk to me about how great of a wrestler I was? Yep, you guessed it...0.

And that is why I sit here today and ask myself what really makes a dynasty worth it. What is it that makes a legacy good enough or worthwhile enough to spend all of your time and energy trying to accomplish it. And that's when I can't help but ask myself another question. Is there some other way that I could have used my life and invested my time and energy in high school that would have left a different legacy? One that would still be talked about today. One that would have been worth it? And if so...what kind of legacy or dynasty would that have been.

As we were writing this message I was talking to Nick about this whole idea, and the funny thing is that he had a similar type of experience. I won't tell his whole story, but the short of it is that he was the prom king his senior year. At the time it was awesome, but he was telling me that whenever he goes back to Macomb no one ever looks at him and says, hey guys! There's Nick Plassman...the Macomb High School Prom King in 1998. It was great at the time...but didn't really have that lasting of an impact.

So then...what really makes a dynasty worth it? There are a ton of ways that we could measure success, and dynasties, and legacies and all of those things, but I feel like there is really only

one way to know for certain if it is really worth it. Actually, I think that there is only one word that will ever serve as a true measure of whether or not a dynasty or legacy is really worth it?

Any thoughts on what that word is? I believe that it's the word eternal. The majority of the success that I have pursued and the legacies that I have pursued and tried to leave have been very temporary. Think about the different stages of your life that you have been through. It is probably the easiest for you to think about it in terms of schools. You have grade school. You have junior high. And then you have high school. So think about this with me for a second. What kinds of things are you pursuing? In the stage that you are in right now what kinds of things are you trying to accomplish that you will be remembered by. My guess is that if you are anything like me that all of your answers are temporary. Perhaps you want to be the best at whatever sport or activity you are in and that someday you want people to talk about how great you are. Even if it lasts all the way up until the day that you die...it is still temporary. Or maybe you want to be the most popular or have the most friends...I promise you that it will all fade within a few years of being out of high school at most. And then you will someday look back and realize that it was all temporary.

Now...don't get me wrong guys. I am not trying to be a downer here, and I am also not trying to say that you shouldn't strive to be the best at everything you do. But what I am saying is that if the dynasty you are trying to create for yourself...or if the legacy you are trying to leave is not eternal...then someday you will look back and realize that it wasn't really worth it. Listen to these verses:

Matthew 6:20-21 -- 19"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

1 Timothy 6:7 -- 7For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it.

At some point we must come to the realization that the only measure of our success and of a dynasty that is truly worth it is whether or not it is eternal. What kind of dynasty are you creating?

III: An eternal dynasty

So then what does it look like to create an eternal dynasty or to be a part of a team that really is the greatest dynasty of all time?

[Small group legacy video]

The only dynasty that truly matters is the one that is eternal. And I can't help but think how different my life would be if I was continually reminding myself of that. I would spend a lot less time and energy on things that are temporary. And I guess to be real simple about it...my life would look a lot more like Jesus.

That may sound like the typical pastor thing to say, but think with me for a second about the life of Jesus. Everything that he ever did with his life was about creating an eternal dynasty. Jesus talked about it as "The Kingdom." Let me tell you a little about this kingdom. [Pictures of a kingdom in the background]

[Jesus with Dirty Feet Stuff]

I want to be a part of that. And even more than that I begin to realize how unimportant the temporary things really are. All of Jesus' miracles, all of his conversations with people, all of his time spent teaching his disciples was for one purpose...he was creating a dynasty. He was calling and inviting people to be a part of a kingdom that is eternal. That's really what it looks like to be creating an eternal dynasty with your life.

Conclusion

I wish that my entire life would have been about an eternal dynasty. I feel like I wasted so much time. The reality is that we can't change our past and it's not good to beat ourselves up about it, but we can definitely learn from it. I would give anything to be able to walk the halls of Macomb High School as a student

again. Man...my purpose would be so much different. The sports were so much fun. I loved being one of the best wrestlers to ever wrestle at MHS. It was exciting and it felt at times that life couldn't get any better. It felt sometimes like I was on top of the world and that if only I could accomplish the next goal it would get even better. And I'm sure the friendships would still be great. The proms and homecomings were always so much fun...well, mostly fun anyway.

But you know what guys...if I were to go back to high school right I would give all of those things up if it meant that I could have spent more time with people like Nick. I met Nick freshman year and through my life and through our conversations Nick was able to get a glimpse of this eternal dynasty. His life was changed forever and I thank God that I was able to be a part of it. And I wonder how many more experiences I could have had just like that one if I wasn't so consumed with the temporary. I would have spent less time trying to achieve praise and status from things that are temporary. I would have spent less time thinking about what other people thought of me. I would have answered people differently when they asked me why I didn't go to all the parties or why I didn't want to have sex. I would take back so many of my conversations that hurt people and cut people down.

My life would have been sold out to this eternal kingdom. But I thank God that I am at a place where I am learning about what is important. My prayer is that God will take my life and use it to change lives forever. And my prayer is that you will begin to see right now that a temporary dynasty isn't really a dynasty at all. The purpose of a dynasty is that it will go on forever. May you decide today that your life will be about the only real kind of dynasty...an eternal one?