

## **Are You a Spectator or a Fan?**

### **Discipleship: Not a Spectator Sport**

**by Chris Famisaran**

Good morning, everybody. Is today a good Sabbath. Oh, you're killing me. Ah, so I'm sure most of you have heard we raised the money for the roof praise the Lord. I can't tell you how much relief that is. Oh, my goodness. So just to be fair, as well to be transparent. What does that mean? Okay, we've got the money for the roof. Yay. We're hoping to do construction this summer, realistically, August. Only because, you know, we kind of got deluged with rain from January through March. And so everybody realized we need to fix our homes or in our buildings. So we have contracts that we're good to go. It's just a matter of them finishing up their prior prior previous commitments. But the the people that we're going to be dealing with are good people. They've been working on different churches in the area. And so we hope to be able to get this done later this summer. Amen. So from the very bottom of my heart, thank you. Just in April alone, I believe it was over \$39,000 was donated. To be fair, there was a large donation, bigger than usual. But overall, it was a team effort. So it still counts. You know, it was the amount that we needed to hit over \$150,000. So and I know that some of you have asked texted me after April 3, he was like, Pastor, is it okay, if we still give? Will it still go to the building fund? Yes. So if you still want to give to the building fund, you know, we're not going to stop you. It's not just the roof. If you look around our facility, our campus, the roof is just the crux, like we got to get that done. There are plenty of other projects that we're going to be working over. We're not going to do it all in one year. It's going to be a multi year process. But there are other projects that we're looking forward to making the church beautifying because we want the best for the Lord, amen. But we have to do it in stages, the biggest thing is the roof, we have to get that done. And then as you'll see, there are some other areas hopefully providing we have money left over, we'll be able to fix some of the damage that it's not completely necessary, but it will be good to fix. So hopefully we we can get it done. We'll have some money left over, we can take that. And then if there's any extra money, we'll start to knock off and chip off things as they come by. So thank you, thank you. Thank you.

Are you a spectator or are you a fan? Are you a true firm, rabid fan for the whatever your team is? Dodgers, Lakers, Kings. This next month, this rest of the month we're going to be going over a series, Discipleship: Not a Spectator Sport. I

remember as a child driving with my mom who's actually here today, Mom, you can give a high five. That's my mother. Next her is my dad and my uncle and my aunt. So thank you for coming to support me. Today of all days. I remember driving down East Street with my mom and our Ford Aerostar van so actually even remember that the license plate to it as well. We're driving down to Warehouse video y'all remember Warehouse video. Back in the day. Those of you who were like born after 2000, "What's Warehouse video?" It was gone before you ever came along. And in the back of the Warehouse video was the counter the Ticketmaster counter. Now we have Ticketmaster.com One day you had to actually go to the counter. And my mom surprised me buying by buying tickets for my dad and I to go to if that was my first Dodger game. That was my first Dodger game. There's actually a picture of us. I'm wearing this acid wash jacket with corduroy jeans and I got my LA Dodgers. My dad and I had LA Dodgers fans. hats on. And I remember going to that game. I think that you were still in PT school where you just graduated roughly. And I remember though, going to the game, and just having a ball, seeing all of the vendors, the coolie cool, remember that, ah, guy knew I would get somebody. You have the Farmer John hotdogs, the lemonades, all of that, but I remember just being in this awesome scene of just coming together and rooting for the best baseball team in the world ever. As you can tell them, I'm biased. And so it was so awesome to be around such a great crowd.

And I thought, Man, this is a great metaphor for life. Because most people don't just go to a baseball game or a football game. Especially, they go because they are interested. They have an..... they're invested. And their team some people Yeah, they'll wear a shirt there, they will wear a hat. Have you ever like just watch TV and you'll see people their fandom, they will dedicate a whole room it's like a shrine to their favorite team, whether it's the Trojans, or Kansas City Chiefs, or you name any team, right? It's almost like religion to them.

Now, when it comes to the Gospel, okay. Paul writes in Colossians, 3:17. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him. So as we live our lives, we're called to model Christ in fact, is the famous passage that we've been studying for the last several years in Matthew 28, at the very end is to go out into the world to teach, preach, baptize, and make what disciples, and in making disciples, we actually have to help disciples, what does it mean to disciple? The big buzzword, right? Essentially, we're called to relate everything that Jesus has taught to us to share

with others, that they too can also be able to share the good news of Jesus Christ and how we can live a better life. Amen. Because the power of Jesus Christ can change people's lives. Now, throughout Scripture, there's there's several references to what we call sports or athletics. Paul refers to roughing up talking about roughing running several times. And to be involved in sports to do it, especially at a high level requires what practice discipline, sometimes perseverance, all of these things that the site disciples as well had to do. Did they always get it? Right? No, but they they tried to do everything that they could to strongly share the good news of Jesus Christ. And even if we're not athletic, we all have a part to play when we're watching the games. I mean, how many of you watched games? Six the other night? Mm hmm. Gotcha. But you've seen this run that the Lakers are on like, they're winning. Yes, they made the Western Conference Finals. Um, so sports bring people together. The one thing that I love about going to Dodgers game, I could be sitting next to somebody, no idea who they are. But we all have the same purpose. We want to see our favorite team win. And we'll high five each other when somebody hits a homerun or even a bass hit. When Kershaw strikes somebody out, oh, that's a glorious thing. Right? As you can tell, I'm wearing my Kershaw jersey. By the way, if you want to represent your team, I see a few people did please feel free this month. All right, represent your favorite team.

The Olympics, gather our attention every couple of years right. Now in First Corinthians chapter 9:24, through 27, the Apostle Paul uses an illustration of what it takes to be a great athlete, a disciplined athlete. And you know, especially like you have for instance, you there's a lot of athletes who aren't even professional but they want to do well stay, get their normal job done and then before after that, they are training.

Now when it comes to being a follower of Jesus, the disciples sometimes we have this idea that it's so easy to think that, you know, we're saved, and we're good. And the truth is, is it not a daily choice to live for Jesus? Right? Every day, I ask God, please help me to do the right thing. And Lord, grant me the patience to deal with people. And, Lord, please help me to be a faithful servant for you. Give me opportunities, and wisdom to serve you. The people, the Corinthians, who Paul is writing to understood this metaphor very well, because it was also the location for this is, it's me in games where it was held every two years of the different sporting events, which are now actually some of them are included in the Olympics. And so

Paul uses this illustration, to understand that they're running a race for all in a way, in a sense, running a race. And he says, run that you may obtain it. And also, Hebrews 12. One says that God has marked out a race for each one of us, we're all called to participate in the race of life, of sharing Jesus and knowing who Jesus is. And to do it well. It's not a literal race, but a spiritual race. We're not competing with other believers for the prize. We're seeking to ultimately be faithful to complete this race that God has called us to. And so he goes on to say that. First, it's just as competing with athletes who undergo even strict training, we're also called to train, we have to know what we're doing, right. So we need to know who we're running for, obviously, God. So we should know who God is. As we search the Scriptures, as we have conversations, as we, as we worship together, all of these things are preparing and helping us to enable to run a stronger race. In fact, even football players at the NFL level, I watched the documentary of how strict they are like the the, I think it was the New England Patriots invited a camera crew to go through and watch them prep all of the meals, it was literally like feeding a data of a restaurant just going through and preparing all of these meals, for the players on a daily basis, breakfast, lunch, and dinner. They wanted to make sure that the diets of their players was the best. But they also have to practice consistently. They have to eat well, they have to lift weights in order to thrive. And so are we taking the time as disciples to be able to learn? Are we growing in strength and muscles, and not only just lifting but practicing our faith, exercising our faith? By praying by studying by having conversations with other people, whether they know or don't know, actually, if you want to really learn about Jesus tried teaching people about who Jesus is, you're going to learn real quick, because you don't want to go in without all of the answers and then. And so we're ultimately called to run the race and run it well. Victory is spending time with Jesus forever. And so we have to be committed, in a sense, disciplined, and all of these things, these are things that we as fans look forward to, how many of you have taken inspiration from an athletic player or an athlete who had to overcome such tremendous obstacles to be able to play their favorite sport? In fact, just off the top of your head, who can you think of that has overcome significant hardship just to be able to play the game? Anybody come to mind? Derrick Rose, Okay. Anybody else? Who are now though, yes. Okay. Okay. So there's there's a number of players that we can look back to or athletes who have overcome significant hardship, whether it's a physical injury, or you name it, and yet, with God as we have sung and as we've seen, nothing's impossible of God. All things are possible. James 1:12 says bless it is the one who perseveres under trial Because having

stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life, the Lord has promised those who love Him. Paul also says, Therefore I do not run like someone running aimlessly. I don't fight like a boxer being in the air. Paul is telling us that as we race to win, because we want to be with Jesus. And it's not a race again with others. So please don't be trying to elbow your way to Jesus. Have mercy. We have to have purpose. Why are we even doing this?

In a way? There, there's this idea that you know, oh, well, let me put it a different way. People who play in the NBA they don't play just to get better at the game. They play to win. Right? Because they want to win the championship. Anybody who else says that? It says otherwise, pretty sure they're probably not speaking the full truth. Because they spent hours they spend years crafting their game getting better every day. And we as fans love to see all of this, we love to see people succeed. And let's be honest, when the team that you just do not like when they lose, you take joy in that, don't you? I'm not saying which teams I may or may not, don't like as much. But when my teams of one, I have rejoiced. Get it takes time purpose, you have to have goals. What are you doing to help succeed in your walk with Christ? Obviously, walking in a relationship with Christ is everything. But we have to know how to get better. And so there's resources if you're questioning pastor, how do I get to know Jesus better, please come talk with us. And we'll set you up for how to do that. But it means being intentional. Having an intentional lifestyle of even as we on the day of all days, even finding rest because you can go go go but at some point you have to rest.

William Paul Sal proclaimed, it is unlikely that we will deepen our relationship with God in a casual or haphazard manner. There will be a need for some intentional commitment and some reorganization in our lives. But there is nothing that will enrich our lives more than a deeper and clearer perception of God's presence in the routine of daily living. Now, question, this is going to be uncomfortable, we're going to be really honest. Are you more passionate about representing your favorite team or Jesus? So somebody I know, he went to a Mariners game with his church. And when they got to the to the Mariners game, they of course, loved their team, and they celebrated every hit. Every home run every catch. A fight thought you all get so excited for a baseball game. But you're quiet as doves in the sanctuary service. I can't even get an amen out of y'all. Thank you. I love Anet. Oh, you cannot Oh man. I love this lady. She is so awesome. I'm so glad you're in my life. Thank you. And so are you passionate about sharing Jesus? Do people

know you're a follower of Jesus? Are you trying to hide that? Are you more passionate about representing your favorite team, or Jesus? Are we faithful fans are bad representatives?

There's a day that lives in infamy. I think it was March 31, 2011. Kershaw got his first opening day start. And he did well they won two to one. But guess what overshadowed that whole great when they played the Giants and as you know, sometimes fans have rivalries. And there was a paramedic and EMT by the name of Brian Stowe who was 45 I think it was 45 at the time as he was exiting the building. Two guys said something. He said something back. Some of you know this story on opening day. They beat him so badly because he wore the wrong jersey. And his life has been altered. Now the two individuals who did that eventually got caught and went to jail. I don't know if they're still in jail. because this is over 12 years ago, but it was not a good look. And in the end, the Dodgers were found negligent. They didn't have enough security, they didn't have enough lighting. And yet, the actions of these two Dodgers fans, I love the Dodgers, but these two individuals put a black stain on the fans of all of Dodger fandom. It was a bad day for Dodgers. And worst of all, it was a bad day for Brian Brian Stone, because his life was significantly altered. He had two children, who are now young adults. But still, even to that day that day, shocked and changed their lives. And now Brian's parents have to care for him the rest of his life. He literally came down from Santa Cruz to be able to see his favorite team on opening day.

How are we representing Jesus? Are we being kind and loving? Or can we be nasty and cruel? Being a fan requires commitment and responsibility. So we've talked about the fact that there's some people buffaloes fans, Buffalo Bills, fans, you guys are hardcore. Who are the team's the Mets fans are hardcore. Think of the teams who have actually never even won a Super Bowl or championship. And yet they're diehard fans, or even Wrexham anybody know who Wrexham is, you know, Ryan Reynolds and Rob MacClenny. You'll know who they are. They bought a soccer team in Wales. And they've done poorly for years. And just this not spoiler, but they're doing better now since they've won the team. But team and they've gone to the next level. But it took many years of ownership, the team ownership not doing well. It can be frustrating as a fan to see your team who you want to root for. But just making bumbling decisions both as players and also an ownership of being a fan requires commitment and responsibility to represent well. So do we represent Jesus well in our homes, number one in our neighborhoods, our

neighbors and our work at the parking lot of Ralph's, Stater Brothers, Walmart, Target. The post office never seen such animosity. Read recently, maybe a couple of weeks ago at a specific post office that I'm thinking. Patience, my friends we all needed. So who's your favorite team? More importantly, who are you representing? Are you and I'm not saying don't represent the Rams. But if we're representing the Rams and the Dodgers more than we are of the love of Jesus, we got to ask ourselves, what are we talking in doing? Okay, so be committed.

So this week, I want you to reflect are you committed to the team in times of good and bad? Are you committed to following Jesus in the times of good and sometimes challenging times? That right? Because life is not always going to be awesome and up, there are going to be dips are going to be up and down. But the beautiful thing is we have a community of believers and a family that wants to walk alongside you all. So can we also be a big fandom for Jesus here in Downey church? Let's not be spectators. Let's be fans. And actually next week, let's not just be fans, but let's let's take it a step from just being fans.

So may God bless you. Have a great week. Let's pray. God, we thank you for your good and your mercy endures forever. Thank you, Lord for the many challenges that have come along the way as painful and sometimes frustrating as they can be. Lord, we've reached a great financial goal this this month or last month, to be able to help take care of our building. We pray Lord, that the that our contractors get done even quicker so we can get our roof fixed even quicker. But Lord, we also pray that you will help us you've sustained us thus far, and we know you will, moving forward leading guidance and all that we do forgive us of our sins. Help us to see all that you do. We've learned many things that we have we give to you and all the things that are in our hearts and our minds. do with them. Help us to move forward together. Help us especially not be spectators. But may we be active participants sharing and proclaiming our love for you in Jesus name, amen.

Oh, and the challenge. Go represent Jesus this week.