

# 22-0915p - Transcript

## 24-0915p - *Eye On The Prize*, Tom Freed

**Bible Reader:** Mike Mathis

This transcript transcribed by TurboScribe.ai

See a detailed summary: [Detailed Summary HTML](#) - [Detailed Summary PDF](#)

## Eye On The Prize

### Scripture Reading

**Scripture Reader:** Mike Mathis

Good evening. We're reading from 1 Corinthians 9, 24-27. That's

#### 1 Corinthians 9, 24-27.

Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives a prize? Run in such a way that you may win. Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable.

Therefore, I run in such a way as not without aim. I box in such a way as not beating the air. I discipline my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified.

### Sermons

**Preacher:** Tom Freed

All right, good to see everybody. We've changed it up a little since we had Tony speaking, so I get to do it tonight. I had a little extra time to prepare, so my sermon is keep your eye on the prize.

We live in a world full of distractions and entertainment that can keep us occupied and not always focus on the things that we should be focused on. There are plenty of things to think and worry about and take our attention away from God, and there's a worry, especially in crazy times like this. Tony touched on it before his sermon where he said we do live in a crazy time.

There's a lot of stuff going on and a lot of things to worry about. We have entertainment, endless entertainment with TV and movies, political drama like we've never seen before, social media. Sports, video games, vacations, the list goes on.

We have plenty of stuff that keeps us occupied, keeps our mind thinking about these things. Some of these things can seem harmless, but it can definitely take our attention away from God and his word. Most of us weren't involved in politics a few years ago and could care less about who the president is, but now that's what most people talk about.

I think everybody is involved in politics now or talking about it or thinking about it. There's constant drama in this country, and we're heading down the wrong path. But do the children of God that went before us have it any easier? There's nothing new under the sun, and God's people throughout history have always faced hard times.

If you think it's bad living in this country, try living in the time of Noah, where the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually, Genesis 6-5. But could you imagine every single person on earth thinking evil nonstop? That's why God had to wipe everyone off the face of the earth except Noah and his family. How would you like living in the time of Sodom and Gomorrah, where if you visited their city, even as a man, the whole village would come out to rape you? I don't even think it's that bad in prison.

Can you imagine going to a city like that, and the whole village comes out, the whole city comes out, and they surround your house? What about Israel, when they were slaves for over 100 years in Egypt? They had it very rough until God raised up Moses to lead them to freedom. Even when Jesus walked the earth, times were tough. The Jews had been conquered by a powerful and brutal Roman army, and the government was pretty hard on them.

It wasn't easy to live under Roman rule, especially if you're not a Roman citizen. The Jews were looking to a Savior to free them from Rome, but Jesus wasn't bringing in a physical kingdom, but he was bringing in a spiritual kingdom. You don't hear Jesus really talking about politics, except when they asked him about paying taxes, and he said, Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God, Mark 12, 17.

So you think about it, unless I'm missing something, I don't think Jesus talked much about politics. The time Jesus lived in wasn't perfect, and the people had plenty to worry about, but Jesus only focused on one thing, and that was doing his Father's will, John 6, 38. For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me.

How many of us can say the same thing? We need to look to Jesus as an example, and make our main focus doing God's will. We know if we do God's will, all the other things will be given to us, Matthew 6, 33. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.

If we put God first and focus on his kingdom, he'll take care of the rest. We can see that Jesus wasn't too concerned about the government. Imagine being conquered by China or something, and they were ruling over us.

We'd probably definitely be worried, we'd think we really hit it rough. But Jesus, he didn't worry about politics, he worried about doing his Father's will, the kingdom of God. So since the devil can't stop you from becoming a Christian, he will do everything in his power to frustrate and distract you from doing the right thing.

There are so many things out in the world that take our attention away from God, and lead us off the righteous path. We have a lot of things to worry about, and also some things that entertain us, and keep our minds filled with worldly things. We worry about money, the economy, politics, sickness, disease, relationships, and many other things.

It's endless how many things we worry about and think about. There's so much going on today and so many crazy things happening in this country, it definitely takes our focus away from God. Even though we all have problems, it seems like we're in trouble sometimes.

God says, we don't have to worry about anything, Philippians 4, 6. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. So it doesn't say be anxious for something, if you have cancer, you know, you're faced with some horrible thing, it says be anxious for nothing. So God doesn't want us to worry about anything.

You know, we can pray to Him and ask Him to answer our prayers, and a lot of times He does. We shouldn't be focusing on the horrible things going on in the world, but on the great things we have from God, Philippians 4, 8 through 9. Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good rapport, if there's any virtue and if there's anything praiseworthy, meditate on these things. The things which you learn and receive and heard and saw in me, they do, and the God of peace will be with you.

It's not always easy, but we're supposed to focus on the good things in life, not the bad. When we meditate on these things and obey God, we will have peace, a peace that surpasses all understanding, Philippians 4, 7. And the peace of God which surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds through Christ. This world is not our home.

We should not be caught up, overly caught up in the things in it, Hebrews 13, 14. For here we do not have an enduring city, but we're looking for the city that is to come. Our citizenship is in heaven, and we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, Philippians 3, 20.

We know that this world is not our home. As the song goes, we're just passing through. We shouldn't put so much concern and focus.

It is troublesome, and maybe we worry about even our kids or grandkids. They might have it rough, but overall, this world, you know, we're not staying here forever. It's a short time.

We should be concerned about where we're going to be spending eternity. We need to stop worrying so much about the things of this world and focus on the things above, Colossians 3, 2. Set your mind on the things above, not on earthly things. Let's keep our main focus on God and doing His work, just like Jesus did with His short time on earth.

All He cared about was doing the will of His Father in heaven and focused all His effort on doing the work of God. We should do the same, because we are created in Christ for good works, Ephesians 2, 10. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

As another song says, we'll work till Jesus comes. And if we do that, we'll have a reward in the end. So if life was one big game that everyone is playing, how do you win in the end and have victory? I mean, life kind of is like a game.

We're all playing it. We don't really have a choice. You know, God created us and we're here.

So how do you win? You know, the world, they think we're just a random collection of particles that exploded out of nothing billions of years ago. They call that science. You know, they think, oh, we disappeared out of nowhere.

They don't believe in God or in afterlife. And they think when you die, you're dead and that's it. There's nothing else.

They think there's nothing to live for. Nothing that they do matters. And there is no hope or reason why they exist.

That sounds like a miserable, painful existence. That's why, you know, there's a lot of depressed, suicidal people nowadays. They only live for this world.

And they think that the people with the most toys, money, fame, power, sexual conquest and fun wins the game of life. You ever see the bumper sticker, he who has the most toys wins? Kind of the philosophy of the world. They think that the people who have the most toys, the most things on earth, they win.

They win in life. But we know that reality is far from the truth. And they have been deceived by the devil.

Revelation 12, 9. So the great dragon was cast out with a serpent of old called the devil and Satan who deceives the whole world. He was cast to the earth and his angels were cast out with him. So he does deceive the whole world.

You know, one way or the other, he lies. And those lies a lot of times stick. As Christians, though, we can see through the devil's lies because we know the truth.

We have the truth. We have the Bible. God's Word, it is truth.

So the worldview that best represents reality is a Christian worldview. And the reason is because it is the truth. It is how the world really is.

It explains, best explains exactly how life is. If you take every other worldview, evolution and everything else, any other religion, Christianity is the best explanation for how the world works. And it's backed by evidence.

You know, it's backed by science. Well, the only way to win in this life is to become a Christian and live faithfully. It's not how the world thinks.

It's the exact opposite. You can be poor. You can have nothing.

But if you're a Christian, you'll still win. You can have a miserable life. But if you're a Christian, you still win in the end.

That's a cheat code. You know, you just have to obey God's Word. So look at Lazarus and the rich man.

The rich man was winning in this life. And Lazarus was losing. He was at his gate begging for the scraps from his table.

You know, the dogs were licking his sword. So he had it miserable. But when they both died, the roles were reversed.

Luke 16, 25. But Abraham replied, So I remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things. But now he is comforted here and you are in agony.

Well, the rich man could. I'm sure he wouldn't have switched roles. He wouldn't have lived a miserable life and been in heaven for eternity if he could have been.

He even begged to have one of them to be sent back, to send somebody back and talk to the rest of his family. He realized that even though he had it good on earth, that he made a huge mistake. We have to focus on the things of God and doing His will if we want to win in this life.

Not worry about trivial things of the world. Even if we had gained the whole world, it wouldn't be worth our soul. Every single thing in it still wouldn't be worth going to hell for eternity.

When we watch sports teams or athletes compete, they're all playing a game and competing for a prize. All athletes want to be victorious and hold a championship trophy. You know, the NBA, the football, soccer.

They're all competing because they want to win. They want to hold that trophy at the end of the season. Even second place isn't good enough.

Look at the Buffalo Bills, their four losses. They weren't happy, they weren't excited that they made it to the championship four times. It's only winning.

Every team wants a prize, especially in America. Or that gold medal. They sacrifice and suffer in agony, training and competing to be victorious and win that prize.

And that is how it is as a Christian. You know, we're competing in the game of life. And we have a prize to win.

1 Corinthians 9, 24 through 27. Do you not know those who run in a race, all run, but one receives a prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. And everyone who competes for the prize is tempered in all things.

Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. Therefore I run thus, not with uncertainty. Thus I fight, not as one who beats the air.

But I discipline my body in bringing in the subjection, lest when I have preached to others I should become disqualified. Well, the athletes, you know, they sacrifice a lot. They go through pain and suffering.

And we need to do the same thing if we want to receive our prize. We're going to suffer. We're going to have to sacrifice a lot of things.

To grow as a Christian means sacrificing, means doing away with things that aren't good for us. Like the athletes who do away with the wrong foods or partying and drinking. A lot of them don't have a life.

They don't go out, they don't party, they don't do anything. They focus on their sport they're competing in. So as a Christian we need to do the same thing.

We have to give it our all and do all we can running the race to receive the ultimate prize. Blessed is the man who endures temptation, for when he has been approved he will receive the crown of life. The Lord has promised to those who love him.

James 1.12. We press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God and Christ Jesus. Philippians 3.14. We need to run the race just as Jesus has. Hebrews 12.1-2. Therefore we also since we are surrounded by such a great crowd of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.

Looking unto Jesus the author and the finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. When you look at Jesus ran the race, he suffered, he sacrificed, he did it the perfect way. You know, we have him as an example.

We also have Paul who did the same thing. He gave everything he had to finish the race to receive a crown. You know, we say that Jesus was God so he could do it, but we can't.

But we have Paul as an example who gave 100%. He suffered and he, you know, he went through a lot as a Christian.

## **2 Timothy 4, 6-8.**

*I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally there is laid out for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give to me on that day. And not me only, but also all who have loved is appearing.*

Paul fought the good fight. He finished the race. He knew at the end of his life that he did all he could. He poured himself out completely. And he knew that he would receive his crown.

There is no doubt because he lived as he was supposed to. He obeyed God. He did all he could.

He suffered and sacrificed. And he knew, there is no doubt that he was going to receive his prize. And we could be the same way.

We live right and we do what we're told, give our all, run the race of life. As a Christian, we know that we have a prize. We have a prize waiting for us.

We should be as Christians fighting the good fight while we patiently wait for the Lord's return. We will love to see his appearing, but those who have not obeyed the gospel will be a dreadful day. Isaiah 219.

They shall go into the holes of the rocks and into the caves of the earth from the terror of the Lord and the glory of his majesty when he arises to shake the earth mightily. That was taken talking about Jerusalem being conquered by the Chaldeans in the Old Testament. They had idolatry.

They had false idols. We could also see that it could mean, you know, be looking forward to the destruction of all the enemies of Christ. The day that the Lord comes back will probably be similar to this.

People will be hiding. They'll be scared. They'll be trying to hide under rocks wherever they can go, but there will be nowhere to hide.

As Christians, we should be happy and excited, but those who aren't, it'll be a fearful day. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of a living God. Hebrews 10, 31.

You know, even now, even as a Christian, I couldn't imagine standing before God, being judged. It will be a fearful thing. We can even see in the Bible when angels came to good men, they fell on their knees and they were scared.

It scared the life out of them, some people. You know, even if an angel came, we would be scared. We'd fall on our knees, but imagine standing before God.

It will be a fearful day, especially for those who haven't done the right thing, who haven't become Christians. We don't get second chances. When Christ returns, it will be for judgment.

And behold, I am coming quickly, and my reward is with me, to give everyone according to their work. Revelation 22.12. Those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of condemnation. John 5.29. We know that we're going to be judged by our works.

You know, if we run the race right, we do what we're supposed to do, we'll have eternal life. If not, then we'll have eternal destruction. Life can be a struggle and difficult at times, and we have to make a lot of sacrifices running the race as a Christian.

But in the end, it is worth it to hear those words. His Lord said to him, Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a few things.

I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of the Lord. Matthew 25.23. It would be great to hear that.

To enter into heaven. And when the chief shepherd appears, you will receive a crown of glory that does not fade away. 1 Peter 5.4. That's one of the reasons why we are Christians.

We do love Jesus and appreciate what he's done, but also we want to go to heaven. We want to win that prize. We want to be in heaven for eternity.

Who wants to be in hell? Burning in flames in eternal darkness for eternity. So we are running the race. And if we keep working hard and doing the right thing, we'll be rewarded.

We'll have victory. That's the only way to win. Even if you are a billionaire on this earth, you're Bill Gates or whoever you want to say, Jeff Bezos, Donald Trump, or you're in Hollywood.

You know, if you're Brad Pitt or whoever. They have it great here, but they're going to lose in the end. The only way to win is to become a Christian and live right.

So judgment day is coming sooner than you may think. So let's stay focused on the prize and do not let this world distract you. Well, everybody's a Christian here, but if you have been distracted or need the prayers of the congregation, you can come forward.