

**Sermon Series: “Christ at the Crossroads”—Lord of Life Lutheran, Westfield, IN—Holy Thurs. – 3/24/05**

**Title: “Christ at the Crossroads of Disqualification”**

**Text: 1 Corinthians 9: 24—10:13 & 1 Corinthians 11: 27-28**

**Intro:** *Ills.: Olympic Disqualification*

**Theme:** Aware that we always live under constant threats to our faith and that losing it may result in being disqualified for eternal life, we come to the Lord’s Supper tonight seeking his grace and help to keep us secure in his salvation by grace through faith.

**What can disqualify us from the “prize” (Print and read 1 Corinthians 9: 24-27)**

- Paul in the context of the greater context of the Lord’s Supper discussion (chaps.10&11) speaks of worthiness
  1. **Ills.: Life and ministry are always contextual**
  2. Speaks of the seriousness of the battle at work within us and what is at stake around us (the prize = heaven)
  3. Speaks to the spiritual training of evaluation, rooting out wickedness, confession & forgiveness
  4. Speaks to the humble attitude toward our salvation (not flippant “*once saved always saved.*”)
    1. “*Having preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.*” 9: 27
    2. *Those who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age, if they fall away, to be brought back to repentance, because to their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting him to public disgrace. Heb. 6: 5-6*
- Paul illustrates the dangers that attend the people of God to remain focused in their spiritual walk
  5. **Poly-spiritual saturated lives (Print and read 1 Cor. 10: 1-5)** – instead of being thankful for God’s supernatural provision the Hebrews developed an attitude of ingratitude, which later resulted in rebellion
  6. **Subtle temptation to Cynicism (Print and read 10: 6)** — In the midst of God’s miraculous and holy presence the Israelites were not satisfied and lusted after more (food, pleasure, power, riches)
  7. **Self-worship (idolatry) (Print and read 10: 7)** — dethroned Christ and enthroned self as focus of thoughts/affection
  8. **Tolerated immorality (Print and read 10: 8)** — sexual immorality became rampant in Exodus, just as it was in first-century Corinth and as it is today (focus on pleasure for pleasure’s sake).
  9. **Cheap grace attitude (Print and read 10: 9-10)** — despite God’s goodness toward them, the people became bitter and complained against His plans and provision
  10. Paul would later say to the Ephesians, “*And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Eph 4: 30-31*

**Worthy to receive God’s grace (Print and read 1 Corinthians 11: 27-28)**

- Paul writes to Corinthians who view themselves as “self-contained” spiritually
  11. Conducted themselves among each other and in the partaking of the Lord’s supper with pride and arrogance
  12. Admonition of these verses not to make the Lord’s Supper into some fearful event but rather into one which we come with much humility and awe of what we are given and what it took to make this a means of God’s action of grace
- Worthy to receive coming with an attitude: “I am a unworthy sinner but I believe Jesus died for me to make me worthy”
  13. Peter’s statement: “*Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!*” and Jesus return statement, “*Do not fear, from now on you will be fishers of men.*” Luke 5: 8, 10
  14. When we come tonight to one of the most awesome events of the Lord’s supper, it is about God not me
  15. **Ills.: A Feast that Cost Everything but which all changed everything**
- Humble to admit: “I am not able to avoid temptation and sin, but God is able”
  16. *No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it. 1 Cor10:13*

17. *Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. Phil 1: 6*

· Unpretentiously confident to say: "I need God's help to go forward and live as more than a conqueror over sin."

18. *For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope--the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good. Titus 2: 11-14*

### **Disqualified for competition**

It was Monday night, August 3, at the 1992 Olympics in Barcelona, Spain. At the track and field stadium, the gun sounded for the 400-meter semifinals. About 100 meters into the race, Britain's Derek Redmond crumpled to the track and rolled onto the infield with a torn right hamstring. Medical attendants rushed out to assist him, but as they approached Redmond, he tried to wave them off, struggled to his feet, and crawled and hopped in a desperate effort to finish the race. He did manage to cross the finish line but then was aghast to look up at the scoreboard and discover that he had been disqualified by the judges of the race. It appears that the rules state that any runner who leaves the field/track during an event or is assisted by anyone else to accomplish the task shall be disqualified from the race. Despite many long years of training and hard work. Despite the right intention to finish the race in the prescribed manner, Derek was disqualified in the end because he was found in violation of how the race should be run and finished.

### **1 Cor. 9:24-27**

<sup>24</sup>Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. <sup>25</sup>Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. <sup>26</sup>Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. <sup>27</sup>No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

### **1 Cor. 10:1-13**

<sup>1</sup>For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers, that our forefathers were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. <sup>2</sup>They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. <sup>3</sup>They all ate the same spiritual food <sup>4</sup>and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ. <sup>5</sup>Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them; their bodies were scattered over the desert. <sup>6</sup>Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did. <sup>7</sup>Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written: "The people sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in pagan revelry." <sup>8</sup>We should not commit sexual immorality, as some of them did--and in one day twenty-three thousand of them died. <sup>9</sup>We should not test the Lord, as some of them did--and were killed by snakes. <sup>10</sup>And do not grumble, as some of them did--and were killed by the destroying angel.

<sup>11</sup>These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come. <sup>12</sup>So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall! <sup>13</sup>No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.

### **A feast which cost everything but also changed everything**

There's a wonderful story by Isak Dinesen called *Babette's Feast*, about a strict, dour, fundamentalist community in Denmark. Babette works as a cook for two elderly sisters who have no idea that she once was a chef to nobility back in her native France. Babette's dream is to return to her beloved home city of Paris, so every year she buys a lottery ticket in hopes of winning enough money to return. And every night her austere employers demand that she cook the

same dreary meal: *boiled fish and potatoes*, because, they say, Jesus commanded, "***Take no thought of food and drink.***" One day the unbelievable happens: Babette wins the lottery! The prize is 10,000 francs, a small fortune. And because the anniversary of the founding of the community is approaching, Babette asks if she might prepare a French dinner with all the trimmings for the entire village. At first the townspeople refuse: "***No, it would be sin to indulge in such rich food.***" But Babette begs them, and finally they relent, "***As a favor to you, we will allow you to serve us this French dinner.***" But the people secretly vow not to enjoy the feast and instead to occupy their minds with spiritual things, believing God will not blame them for eating this sinful meal as long as they do not enjoy it. Babette begins her preparations. Caravans of exotic food arrive in the village, along with cages of quail and barrels of fine wine. Finally the big day comes, and the village gathers. The first course is an exquisite turtle soup. The diners force it down without enjoyment. But although they usually eat in silence, conversation begins to take off. Then comes the wine: Veuve Cliquot 1860, the finest vintage in France. And the atmosphere changes. Someone smiles. Someone else giggles. An arm comes up and drapes over a shoulder. Someone is heard to say, "***After all, did not the Lord Jesus say, love one another?***" By the time the main entrée of quail arrives, those austere, pleasure-fearing people are giggling and laughing and slurping and guffawing and praising God for their many years together. This pack of Pharisees is transformed into a loving community through the gift of a meal. One of the two sisters goes into the kitchen to thank Babette, saying, "***Oh, how we will miss you when you return to Paris!***" And Babette replies, "***I will not be returning to Paris, because I have no money. I spent it all on the feast.***" Can you think of anyone else who gave his all to make us a loving community through the gift of a meal? **Citation: Victor Pentz, from the sermon "The Gourmet God," delivered at Peachtree Presbyterian Church, Atlanta, Georgia (11-23-03)**

### **1 Cor. 11:27-28**

<sup>27</sup>Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. <sup>28</sup>A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup.