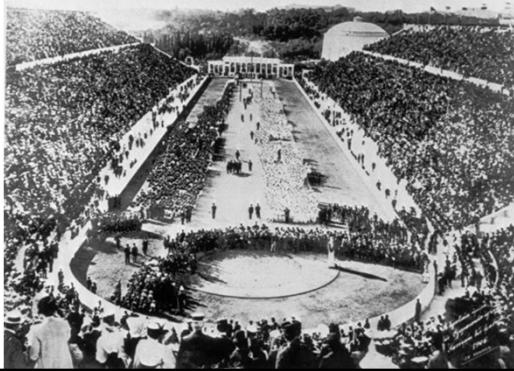


Going For Gold

The Olympics

- Ancient Olympics – 776 BC to 393 BC
- Competitions between city states revolving around battle skills
- Uzziah was King in Judah 768 BC - 2 Chron.26
- Solomon's Temple was destroyed in 586 BC
- Israel surrendered to Alexander the great 332 BC
- Wooden stadium was built in Athens in 301 BC
- Rebuilt with marble in 124 BC
- First modern Olympics were held in that stadium in Athens in 1896



Pursuing The Prize

- What is Your Prize? Your Goal? What are you pursuing?
- Temporary or Eternal? 1 Cor. 9:24-27
- In Paul's day, they won a Laurel wreath
- Today, Governments spend millions to help athletes win temporary glory.
- What effort are we willing to spend to win the **ETERNAL** prize?
- **RUN with Purpose TO WIN the Prize!**

The Eternal Prizes

- What is the Prize?
- 1. It is the JOY and GLORY of Heaven itself
 - It is a place of Fellowship- Rev.19:5-8 – The Joy of a wedding
 - It is a place of Light and Life – Rev.20:10, 11, 21:23-25
 - It is a place of international Worship – Rev.4:8-11; 5:9-14
- 2. Personal Rewards
 - 1 Cor.9:24-27 - “stephanos” crowns for worthy service – the garland of leaves awarded the victor in the Greek athletic games
 - They required effort and self discipline
 - 9:19-23,26 – Paul approached soul winning with the same discipline an athlete approached the Games

Crowns Worthy Of Pursuing

- God rewards the faithful
- A. The Crown of Joy
 - Soul winners Crown is for leading people to Jesus
 - Phil.4:1; 1 Thess.2:19-20;
- B. The Crown of Righteousness
 - 2 Tim.4:7-8 For those who Looked for and Lived His coming
- C. The Crown of Life
 - James 1:12 Remains faithful through trial
- D. The Crown of Glory
 - 1 Pet.5:2-4 - For Pastors humbly, sacrificially, serving

Crowns For Worthy Service

- How are they given out?
- 1. Not according to your ability, but your faithfulness
 - Matt.25:14-15; 21,23
 - God grades on the curve
- 2. According to your Effort
 - Luke 19:12,13; 17,19
 - This assumes equal ability
 - Greater effort resulting in greater reward

How Are YOU Running To Win ?

- Are you running to win? 1 Cor.9:19-27
 - This is not a game!
 - Shouldn't we be willing to work harder for an eternal crown than athletes are for a temporary one?
- Is Winning a Priority? Heb.12:1
 - What is slowing you down?
 - What needs to be laid aside?
- What are you Focused on? Heb.12:2
 - 2 Cor.4:16-18; Col.3:1-4; 1 Tim.6:12

How Are YOU Running?

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider Him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

Heb12:1-3