

Date: **6th August, 2017**

Series: **Star Witness**

Topic: **Eyes on the Prize**

Texts: **Philippians 3:12-15, I Corinthians 9:24-26**

*“¹²Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. ¹³Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, ¹⁴I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.” **Philippians 3:12-14 (NKJV)***

*“²⁴Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. ²⁵And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. ²⁶Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air.” **I Corinthians 9:24-26 (NKJV)***

In the verses leading to the passage in Philippians above, Paul talked about his qualifications and experience, pointing to the fact that what he had accomplished so far in his life would normally have been enough to set him apart as one who had achieved greatness, thus, making him live a satisfactory life (verses 4-7). Yet, he counted it all loss, was willing to put all his accomplishment aside so he could reach out for and win a more valuable prize (verse 8). Paul was in a state of conscious awareness - aware of what he had achieved, lost, and was aiming for. He had received understanding of the game and how to play it to win.

To win the prize in any game, you must know the rules of that game so that you are clear about what you should aim for; you have to identify the location of the goal post so you can plan and successfully score. Rules exist to guide us in playing the game right. Take football for instance, if there were no rules guiding players, Lionel Messi would not be recognized as such a great striker and a successful player - he knows his game. Similarly Neymar, who just got signed on to PSG at a record breaking 198 million Great Britain Pounds (GBP) and earning over half a million GBP per week each over the length of his five-year contract, has been able to pull this much for his skills, by his understanding of the game, and for his courage to leave his comfort zone under the shadow of Messi.

The question to answer at this point is, “Do you know the rules by which you should play?”

Through the passage in Matthew 28:19-20 – *“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of*

the age. Amen.” – we are shown the rules by which we should play the game: to win souls and to make disciples of men. A good player wins souls.

Jesus handed over, the ministry of reconciliation to us. It is the game we are expected to play and there can be no real success in the life of a Christian without winning.

“Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation,” II Corinthians 5:18

Are you playing in this game or are you spectating?

There is no ownership (or shareholding) through mere followership – no matter how much you cheer from your living room while watching your preferred team, no matter how much fan’s memorabilia of your favourite team or player you buy, when the time for profit sharing for the owners and shareholders comes, or when that player receives his pay, you do not get any part of the money because you don’t have any stake in your supposedly team. Similarly, there is no prize for those who do not play the game according to the rules.

Some people think the game is about moral soundness but that is not all; some others think it is about breakthroughs, but the real breakthrough is in winning souls for God’s kingdom, and that is the only game that matters. Don’t be on the side-lines, watching while others are achieving great things for God, and do not be worried about what to say, God will put the right words in your mouth.

How have you defined your prize? Is it material wealth or the intangible things that God has defined? When you think of what you have planned for the next one week or one month of your life, will it translate to eternity?

Prayer:

Lord help me play the game as I should; I don't want to be missing-in-action, I want it to be said of me, “Well done good and faithful servant...”