

Lenten Devotional March 26, 2023

Scripture

1 Corinthians 9:19-27

19 For though I am free with respect to all, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I might win more of them. 20 To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though I myself am not under the law) so that I might win those under the law. 21 To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law) so that I might win those outside the law. 22 To the weak I became weak, so that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, so that I might by any means save some. 23 I do it all for the sake of the gospel, so that I may share in its blessings.

24 Do you not know that in a race the runners all compete, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win it. 25 Athletes exercise self-control in all things; they do it to receive a perishable garland, but we an imperishable one. 26 So I do not run aimlessly, nor do I box as though beating the air; 27 but I punish my body and enslave it, so that after proclaiming to others I myself should not be disqualified.

Devotional

David Peters '07

Lent is about connecting with God. The goal is not self-sacrifice for its own sake, but rather it is about how we can clean out the unnecessary parts of our existence to fully experience who God is. As Paul points out here, we often experience God through our interactions with other people. However, not any interaction will do. We must have purposeful interactions with others, where we listen for God in an effort to hear what he wants for us.

Hearing God through other people is tough. Paul does not say otherwise. It involves meeting people where they are at in their personal and spiritual lives. It can be uncomfortable, like when an athlete pushes their body to the brink. By helping others see God, we experience God. As Paul says, "I have become all things to all people . . . so that I may share in [the gospel's] blessings." When we take the time to listen to those who are lonely, downtrodden, or scared, we experience God. When we help those who seem unworthy of help, we experience God. When we are generous and we don't have to be, we experience God.

However, as Paul says, it is not good acts for the sake of good acts. Like an athlete who reaches the top level, we must go above and beyond. It is only when we do these things with our eyes and ears open to where God wants us to be, that we share in the gospel's blessings.

Prayer

Dear Lord, in a world full of distractions, help us to see your will. In a world full of noise, help us to listen for you. Help us not to sacrifice during this Lenten season merely for its own sake, but in an effort to find you in all that we do. In Jesus name. Amen.