



RUN THE RACE

GLASGOW

HELPFUL IDEAS FOR SERMONS AND TALKS

COMMONWEALTH GAMES SUNDAY SERVICE (before or during the Games)

Why not make your Sunday service games-related on 19 or 26 July or 2 August. (Coming in sports wear may be an option.)

Sports-related Scripture passages for possible readings and sermon thoughts

[RACE]

Ecclesiastes 9:11 I have seen something else under the sun: The **race** is not to the swift or the battle to the strong, nor does food come to the wise or wealth to the brilliant or favour to the learned: but time and chance happen to them all.

Acts 20:24 However, I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the **race** and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me – the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace.

1 Corinthians 9:24 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.

Galatians 2:2 I went in response to a revelation and set before them the gospel that I preach among Gentiles. But I did this privately to those who seemed to be leaders, for fear that I was running or had run my **race** in vain.

Galatians 5:7 You were running a good **race**. Who cut in on you and kept you from obeying the truth?'

2 Timothy 4:7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the **race**. I have kept the faith.

Hebrews 12:1 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.

[WIN]

Philippians 3:14 I press on toward the goal to **win** the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

1 Thessalonians 4:12 so that your daily life may **win** the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody.

[TRAIN]

1 Timothy 2:4 Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives' tales; rather, **train** yourself to be godly.

Titus 2:4 Then they can **train** the younger women to love their husbands and children.

[Endure]

Psalms 49:12 But man, despite his riches, does not **endure**; he is like the beasts that perish.

2 Timothy 2:3 **Endure** hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus.

2 Timothy 2:10 Therefore I **endure** everything for the sake of the elect, that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory.

2 Timothy 2:12 if we **endure**, we will also reign with him. If we disown him, he will also disown us:

2 Timothy 4:5 But you, keep your head in all situations, **endure** hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.

Hebrews 12:7 **Endure** hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father?

1 Peter 2:20 But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and **endure** it? But if you suffer for doing good and you **endure** it, this is commendable before God.

Revelation 3:10 Since you have kept my command to **endure** patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth.

[PRIZE]

1 Corinthians 9:24 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**.

1 Corinthians 9:27 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**.

Colossians 2:18 Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you for the **prize**. Such a person goes into great detail about what he has seen, and his unspiritual mind puffs him up with idle notions.

Sample sermon outlines

A) *The Gospel in another culture – Acts 17:16-34*

INTRODUCTION

Culture is not simply where we were born, crossing culture can also be different interest groups e.g. talking to people about sport. The Church has a message for all humankind and need to use all possible means to share the message across cultural barriers. Sports is a universal language, and we need to use this as an opportunity to bring the Gospel.

1. PAUL'S DISTRESS AND CULTURAL BARRIER

v.16 – materiality vs spirituality

v.18 – message not transcending the culture

2. PAUL'S WILLINGNESS TO BE RELEVANT TO ANOTHER CULTURE

v.22f – starts with what is familiar top the listeners

v.28 – quotes one of their own poets to engage culture and communicate Christ

3. PAUL'S CLEAR COMMUNICATION BROUGHT REACTION

v.32 – different responses – not interested – wanted to hear more

v.34 – some believed!

The message of the Cross will still have many different reactions today

CONCLUSION

1 Corinthians 9:19-23 (*The Message*)

¹⁹⁻²³ Even though I am free of the demands and expectations of everyone, I have voluntarily become a servant to any and all in order to reach a wide range of people: religious, nonreligious, meticulous moralists, loose-living immoralists, the defeated, the demoralized—whoever. I didn't take on their way of life. I kept my bearings in Christ—but I entered their world and tried to experience things from their point of view. I've become just about every sort of servant there is in my attempts to lead those I meet into a God-saved life. I did all this because of the Message. I didn't just want to talk about it; I wanted to be in on it!

B) “Running to Win: The Race of Faith”

Key Scripture

- Hebrews 12:1–2
- 1 Corinthians 9:24–27

Theme

Life as a race requiring endurance, focus, and purpose.

Opening Illustration

- Athletes at the Commonwealth Games train for years for a race that may last seconds
- The discipline, sacrifice, and focus mirror the spiritual life

Main Points

1. Run with endurance
 - “Let us run with perseverance...”
 - Faith is not a sprint but a marathon
 - Encourage steady commitment rather than quick enthusiasm
2. Throw off what hinders
 - Athletes strip away excess weight
 - Spiritually: habits, distractions, and attitudes that slow us down
3. Fix your eyes on the goal
 - Athletes focus on the finish line
 - Faith calls for focus on Christ, not comparison with others

Application

- What is slowing you down spiritually?
- Where do you need endurance right now?

Closing Thought

- The prize is not temporary glory, but eternal life and transformation
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C) “One Team, Many Nations: Unity in Diversity”

Key Scripture

- 1 Corinthians 12:12–27
- Galatians 3:28

Theme

Unity across diversity, inspired by international sport.

Opening Illustration

- The Commonwealth Games brings together nations, cultures, and backgrounds
- Despite differences, athletes compete under shared values and rules

Main Points

1. Many parts, one Body
 - The Church is like a team with different roles
 - Every person matters – no one is expendable
2. Strength in diversity
 - Different gifts and perspectives strengthen the whole
 - Diversity is not a weakness but a design
3. Competing Without Dividing
 - Athletes compete fiercely yet respect one another
 - Christians are called to live with humility and love, even in disagreement

Application

- How do we treat those who are different from us?
- Are we building unity or division?

Closing Thought

- God’s vision is a united people drawn from every nation

D) “Training for More Than Gold”

Key Scripture

- 1 Timothy 4:7–8
- 2 Timothy 4:7



Resource created for Glasgow Churches Together
by Commissioner Ivor Telfer (Salvation Army)



Theme

Spiritual discipline has lasting value beyond physical achievement.

Opening Illustration

- Athletes commit to strict training regimes for a medal
- The reward is significant – but temporary

Main Points

1. Discipline shapes destiny
 - Training is intentional and costly
 - Spiritual growth requires practice: prayer, reflection, service
2. Temporary vs eternal rewards
 - Medals fade, records are broken
 - Spiritual investment has eternal impact
3. Finishing well
 - “I have fought the good fight...”
 - Faithfulness matters more than fame

Application

- What disciplines are shaping your life?
- Are you investing in what lasts?

Closing Thought

- The greatest victory is not standing on a podium, but living a life of faith and love

E) “Running for a Greater Prize”

Key Text: 1 Corinthians 9:24–27

Theme

Discipline and eternal purpose

Main Points

- Everyone Runs – Like athletes in the Games, all are in a race of life
- Training Matters – Spiritual habits shape our character (prayer, Scripture, service)
- The True Prize – Earthly medals fade; God’s reward is eternal

Application

- Challenge the congregation to identify one “training habit” to strengthen
 - Encourage perseverance even when faith feels like a long-distance race
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F) “One Body, Many Nations”**Key Text: 1 Corinthians 12:12–27****Theme**

Unity in diversity

Main Points

- Global Gathering – The Games bring nations together in friendly competition
- The Church as One Body – Many parts, one purpose in Christ
- Celebrating Differences – Cultural diversity as a reflection of God’s creativity

Application

- Pray for visiting athletes and nations
 - Encourage hospitality and outreach to visitors in Glasgow
 - Reflect on how the Church can better include people from all backgrounds
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G) “Strength Through Weakness”**Key Text: 2 Corinthians 12:9–10****Theme**

God’s power in human limitation

Main Points

- Behind Every Athlete – Injuries, setbacks, and unseen struggles
- Paul’s Testimony – God’s grace is sufficient in weakness
- Redefining Strength – True strength is reliance on God, not self

Application

- Speak to those feeling inadequate or overlooked
- Encourage honesty about struggles within the church
- Offer prayer ministry for healing and renewal

OR

PREPARE A SERMON ON IDEAS ON RUN THE RACE

linking in with <https://runtheraceglasgow.org>



1. Hebrews 12:1 – keep going even when the going gets tough – Christian life is a marathon not a sprint – but God gives us all we need
2. 1 Corinthians 9:24 – disciplined Christian living – bring in spiritual disciplines as an athlete needs to be disciplined
3. 2 Timothy 4:7 – finishing faithfully – discussing end of life living and spiritual responses

Prayers

Prayer for Athletes and Nations

Gracious God,
 Creator of all people and source of every good gift,
 we thank you for the joy of sport,
 for the strength of the human body,
 and for the spirit of competition that brings nations together.

We lift before you all athletes preparing for and competing in these Games.
 Grant them health and safety,
 focus and endurance,
 and the courage to give their very best.
 In moments of pressure, bring calm;
 in moments of disappointment, bring hope;
 and in moments of success, grant humility and gratitude.

We pray for coaches, officials, and all who support these events.
 Give them wisdom, fairness, and integrity in all they do.

We remember the nations of the Commonwealth,
 rich in culture, language, and history.
 May this gathering be marked by peace, respect, and friendship.
 Break down barriers of division and misunderstanding,
 and strengthen the bonds that unite us as one human family.
 Bless the host city of Glasgow,
 and all who welcome the world with generosity and pride.
 May this time leave a legacy of unity, joy, and shared purpose.

And in all things, remind us that our true worth
 is not found in medals or victories,
 but in love, compassion, and the dignity You give to every person.

We offer this prayer in humility and hope.
 Amen.

Children's Prayer

Dear God,
Thank you for games and running and playing,
for strong bodies and happy hearts.

Thank you for all the athletes
coming from many different countries.
Please help them do their best,
stay safe, and enjoy what they do.

Help them to be kind to one another,
to play fair, and to never give up.

We pray for all the people watching
and for the city of Glasgow.
Help everyone to feel welcome and happy.

And help us too,
to be good teammates in life—
kind, brave, and full of love.

Amen.

Short Responsive Prayer

Leader: Loving God, we thank you for the joy of sport and the gift of community.

All: Help us to celebrate with gratitude and respect.

Leader: We pray for the athletes of the Commonwealth Games 2026.

All: Grant them strength, safety, and fairness.

Leader: We pray for all nations and peoples gathered together.

All: May there be peace, unity, and friendship.

Leader: We pray for the city of Glasgow.

All: Bless all who live here and all who visit.

Leader: Teach us to live with kindness and humility.

All: So that in all things, love may be our greatest victory.

Amen.

HELPFUL WEBSITES

<https://runtheraceglasgow.org>

<https://salvationist.org.uk/resources/sport-and-wellbeing-resources>

<http://sportsministries.co.uk>

<https://suscotland.org.uk>

<https://gb.ambassadorsfootball.org>