

"REFUSING DISTRACTIONS"

During the 1997 NBA Finals, the Jazz were playing the Bulls on a Sunday. Karl Malone's nickname was "The Postman" b/c he always delivered. At a crucial stage of the game, he was about to shoot a free-throw, Scotty Pippen walked by and said "The mailman don't deliver on Sundays." It distracted Malone and he missed the free-throw and they lost the game. Shows us the need to refuse distractions. Our text: Refusing distractions.

I. THE STRATEGY OF DISTRACTION

A. We make a mistake to think that failure always involves sin or evil

1. Morals/drugs-alcohol/financial indiscretions

a. Not the case: Jesus said many are called, but few are chosen – not many involve sin

B. Our script speaks of a common strategy of hell: **Distractions**

1. *To draw away or divert the mind or attention*

a. To keep us focused on things we don't need to focus on – or shouldn't focus on

b. To keep us from focusing on what we do need to be focused on

2. If you fail to do your job b/c you are distracted – it can have the same effect as if you are evil!

II. 3 COMMON DISTRACTIONS

A. **The distraction of conflict:** *Acts 6:1 In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Grecian Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food.*

1. Classic strategy of hell – to get you focused on conflict

a. It can be your conflict: *Someone offends you* b. It can be someone else's conflict: *Try to involve you*

c. It can be a church conflict: *People in the church are offended or fighting*

2. Both can take your mind/heart away from your calling

a. I know men who have become obsessed with personal violations – to the point it changes them

b. Or men who allow their attention to be consumed by what someone else is upset about

c. Or churches allowed to be consumed with conflict

B. **The distraction of people pressure**

1. People will try and get you to do what they think is best: And many times it is not best!

a. It's clear they were being pressured by people to get involved in a food program

1. *They will tell you* 2. *They will try and make you feel guilty* 3. *They will pull the God card: God told me...*

b. Can be many different types that pressure us

1. *Religious people* 2. *Manipulative people: Power* 3. *Well-meaning people (don't understand)*

c. This can be magnified b/c of our need for people/numbers d. Magnified by need for money

C. **The distraction of good things**

1. Notice what they were being pressured to do wasn't a bad thing – it was good! *Old ladies need to eat!*

a. *Vance Havner: The good can become the enemy of the best*

2. Anything that takes you away from your calling is bad:

III. REFUSING DISTRACTIONS

A. The Apostles refused to allow themselves to be distracted

1. **You have to know clearly what is important in your life/ministry:** *What God has called you to do*

a. *Your calling* b. *The calling of the church*

2. **You have to recognize what is dangerous for what is important**

a. I can't do everything! (General) So you have to refuse some things

b. Know what is personally dangerous: Time-waster (games) People

3. **You have to refuse to be pressured by people:**

a. *Acts 6:2 So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. We're not going to do it! Sometimes kindly. Sometimes forcefully.*

4. **You have to involve other people if necessary**

a. *Conflict: Talk to the Pastor/area leader* b. *Delegation: Appointing someone else can do it in your place*

1. *Acts 6:3 Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them*

B. This will ensure the blessing of God

1. Your heart will be protected 2. Other people may be raised up by delegation 3. God is pleased

a. *Acts 6:7 So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.*