



St Margaret's Church

Together we aim to:

Worship God, Proclaim Jesus,

Grow in the Spirit and Serve the World



In Contact

1st August 2021

1 Corinthians 9: 19-27 Olympics 2: More than Gold



As a child, I had a large poster of a very angry Snoopy holding a tennis racket and storming off. The caption read: *"It does not matter if you win or lose, **until you lose.**"* The original saying ended: *"It is the taking part that matters."* It is day 4 of the Olympics as I write and Team GB have just secured their 4th Gold medal and moved to no.5 in the medals table. Winning and getting the Gold Medal is important. It is the goal of every athlete or sports team.

Last week, looking at the Christian life, we saw that the prize was one of the incentives that helps us run the race with perseverance. St. Paul picks up on this image in 1 Corinthians 9. In verse 24 he writes: *"Run in such a way that you may win"* [the prize]. In the ancient Olympics the prize was the knowledge of victory and a crown made of laurel leaves. Our prize is imperishable (v.25) - something that will not rot, decay, or fade. It can never be taken away from us. It is the promise of eternal life. And unlike the runners in a race, where only one person receives the prize, all of humanity can win this race through Jesus who died and rose again. There is no limit to the number of winners. Paul encourages all to learn from the competitors, running with purpose and focus (v.26) and giving up so much to win.

These days the top prize is a Gold Medal which is more valuable and long lasting than a laurel crown. For Christians, the prize is to be with Jesus for all eternity so an older Paul writes to Timothy: *"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. From now on there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have longed for his appearing."* 2 Timothy 4.7 & 8.

All along Paul is hinting that there is more than gold to the prize. For him, it is about helping others in this life to know about Jesus. He is prepared to *"become all things to all people, so that I might by any means save some"* (1 Corinthians 9. 22). He knows that this will not **earn** him the prize: the prize is a **gift of grace** from God, but Paul wants to stay focussed and run the race with integrity so that he will not be disqualified and will be a constant, good witness to Jesus in all aspects of life and use every opportunity to share and proclaim the Gospel all the way to the finish line.

How do we feel about the race, that by the grace of God, we can all win? Are we aiming for more than gold? What help do we need from God? Turn to prayer now, put on your running shoes and go for more than gold.



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Rev Matt Calladine

Bible Verse for 2021:

I am about to do something new; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?
I will make a way in the wilderness, rivers in the desert.

Isaiah 43: 19

This week:

Our second sermon inspired by the Olympics: this week's title is **'More than Gold'**.

New Wine United Breaks Out: 6.30pm for refreshments.

Evening Celebrations 7.00-8.30pm followed by a time of prayer ministry

Thursday 29th July: St Margaret's with Paul Harcourt.

Friday 30th July: St Peter's with Amy Orr-Ewing.

Saturday 31st July: St Margaret's with Katia Adamas.

Sunday 1st August: St Peter's with Sebastian Stakset.

Monday 2nd August: St Margaret's with Vicky Lloyd.

Tuesday 3rd August: St Peter's with Agu Irukwu.

New arrangements since the lifting of legal restrictions on 19th July:

We are proceeding with caution. We would advise people not in the same bubble to maintain social distancing. Hand sanitiser is available and apart from those leading from the front we advise the wearing of masks.

Bibles have now been returned to the back of seats and we intend to re-start refreshments after church from September.

Church of England advice is to continue just receiving a wafer at this time The PCC will research options in order to make an informed decision at their September meeting.

Summer Services: August 8th to August 29th

Mission Possible 1: Hidden leopards

Mission Possible 2: Journey

Mission Possible 3: Contacts

Mission Possible 4: Stepping Stones

August 1st to 7th Pray for:

- ◆ People living in Errwood Road (Shawbrook Road to Crossley Road).
- ◆ Enjoyable Silly Sports Saturdays and for numbers to increase.
- ◆ Building of good relationships with children & families at Silly Sports Saturdays.
- ◆ Schools' senior management teams and all staff to have a good rest.
- ◆ Protection for children over summer holidays, especially those with a difficult home life.
- ◆ Jon & Jude Witt of Dignity as they have recently returned to Zambia.

Television & Radio this Sunday:

BBC 2 - 13.15pm: Songs of Praise. Aled Jones explores links between faith and food from the Coptic Orthodox Cathedral of Saint George in Hertfordshire.

BBC Radio 4 - 8.10am: Sunday Worship. On 4th August 2020, a nuclear sized explosion at Beirut port killed around 200 people, injured more than 6000 and displaced 300 000. One year later we invite you to pray with us as we lift up our country and its people before the Lord.