TITLE: Get Into the Game!

TEXT: Ephe. 6:12-18; Jn. 2:13-17 & 11:33-35;

2 Co. 5:17-6:1; Gal. 12:20; Colo. 2:9-10; 1 Pet. 4:1-2

INTRODUCTION: The message this morning is about getting into the game….

There is an interesting phenomenon that becomes very prevalent this time of year in millions of homes within America. It is like a mass metamorphosis! A mass transference, if you will!

It starts in early September and comes to a climax in early February and most of you ladies know what I am talking about.

The start of football season.. On Saturday, Sunday and maybe a weeknight a lot of your husbands will go through a metamorphosis and are transformed from the mild mannered person that they are into an armchair quarterback! Sometimes a raving maniac!

This is predominantly a trend of the male gender but women can experience this also.

We have one son, (I won’t mention which one) who would get so into a game that we had to put up or hide all the breakable things in the living room during the game! (Especially the remote control to the t.v.)

I even thought about Hanging signs---caution---ball game in progress---enter at own risk!

One year we got him a football player doll that had arms and legs attached with Velcro so that it could be pulled apart in times of great frustration but then put back together for the next frustrating moment.

Why is it that so many of us will get so involved in a game!

Actually, I believe that, many times, there is a literal transference that takes place.

Emotionally we can actually place ourselves into the game.

Men have a tendency to do this in watching sports but you ladies can do it also.

Example: I can remember a time when I went to an afternoon matinee of a chick flick with Pam while on vacation. When we got our seats I was the only male in the entire theater! At one point in the movie there are Ladies crying all around me! I mean they were really into that movie!

The point is, we all have a tendency to get emotionally involved in these kinds of things at times…..

We all know that this life can be like a battlefield some of the time. It can be full of trial and tribulations.

It seems that daily we run into skirmishes in this life of one sort or another…

The fact is there is a battle that is raging around us each and every day!

**Ephe 6:12 (NIV) For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.**

**13 Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand**.

First Paul tells us of the true origin of the trials and tribulations that we face in life.

**Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.**

Then Paul goes on and tells us what the armor is that we are to put on that will enable us to stand our ground in these spiritual battles that we will face in this life.

**Ephe 6:14 (NIV) Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place,**

**15 and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.**

**16 In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.**

**17 Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.**

**18 And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.**

What Paul was saying was that if we are going to “get into the game” get into the battle of this life and want to be successful, we need to be prepared.

For the Christian our preparation is putting on Gods armor in order to fight and win the spiritual battles that rage around each of us every day .

Let me stop here and ask you a question.

You guys, when you watch a football game or a basketball or baseball or soccer game do you find that you can really get into the game?

Do you find that you can easily transfer yourself onto the playing field and get emotionally involved in what you are watching?

You ladies, when you watch your favorite sport or watch a romantic movie or read a good book do you find that you can easily get into it? That you can transfer yourself into what you are doing and become emotionally involved in it?

Do you find that you can, “get into the game”, so to speak?

Let me ask another question?

How about in your relationship with the Lord?

How about in the battle, the war that is raging between God and Satan over the souls of men, women and children?

Are we “getting into the game” in our spiritual lives with the same vigor and emotion that we get into that football game or basketball game or romantic movie or novel?

You see folks, as Christians, God has called each of us to get into the game of our spiritual life.

God has called us to get so emotionally involved in our relationship with Him and the world in which we live that a transference literally takes place whereby we play out our role as Christians with the same vigor and emotion that we have when we are watching our favorite sporting event on TV.

Do you get as excited for Jesus as you do for your team when they make it to the super bowl?

Do you get as excited for Jesus when you hear testimony of a sinner who was saved by God Grace and escapes the fires of Hell, as you do when your team makes a big play?

Do you get as riled up when you see all the injustice in this world, all the havoc that the opposing team, team Satan, is causing as you do when your favorite football team drops the ball on the one yard line and loses the game?

When you see a life that Satan has destroyed through drugs or alcohol, or a family that Satan has split apart, are you into the game enough that it makes you want to throw something across the room?

You may be thinking, well, a Christian shouldn’t get into the game of life to that degree; A Christian shouldn’t get angry enough at what the devil is doing that they would want to throw things…..

If you feel that way where did you ever get that idea of Christianity? That Christians are to be passive, especially in the areas of righteousness and the spiritual warfare that is taking place all around us.

Let’s go to an example of someone who got into the game, who allowed Himself to become emotionally involved in what was going on in the world around Him….

**John 2:13 (NIV) When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem.**

**14 In the temple courts he found men selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money.**

**15 So he made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple area, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables.**

**16 To those who sold doves he said, "Get these out of here! How dare you turn my Father's house into a market!"**

**17 His disciples remembered that it is written: "Zeal for your house will consume me."**

Kind of sounds like Jesus “got into the game” at times doesn’t it? Like He became emotionally involved at times in what was going on in the world around Him.

**17 His disciples remembered that it is written: "Zeal for your house will consume me."**

**2205 zelos {dzay'-los}**

**1) excitement of mind, ardour, fervour of spirit**

**1a2) the fierceness of indignation, punitive zeal**

Jesus was zealous! He got excited! He got indignant! He was contentious at times!

Jesus was zealous for righteousness! Jesus got excited when He saw the injustices of this world! He was contentious when He saw the hypocrisy of the Pharisee’s.

He was and is very competitive when it comes to the souls of men!

Jesus allowed zeal for God to literally consume Him!

Another time that we see Jesus “getting into the game” is at the death of His friend Lazarus….

Jesus and His disciples were in Jerusalem when they get word that Lazarus had died …Jesus and the disciples go to Bethany where Lazarus had died and encounters Mary and Martha, Lazarus’s sisters…

**John 11:33 (NIV) When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled.**

**34 "Where have you laid him?" he asked.**

**"Come and see, Lord," they replied.**

And then the shortest, but possibly one of the most significant, verses of Scripture…

**35 Jesus wept.**

Jesus just didn’t cry, shed a tear or two, but it says that He wept! There was real emotion involved!

Why? Why did Jesus weep? I mean He knew that he was about to raise Lazarus from the dead? So why did Jesus become so emotional that it caused Him to weep?

He was “into the game” of life!

Jesus saw the pain of Mary and Martha and the pain and hurt of Lazarus’s friends and relatives!

Jesus knew that this was not the way that His Father had intended for things to be!

Jesus knew that, as created, man was not supposed to suffer and die!

Jesus knew what the Garden of Eden was like before the fall! Jesus created it! Jesus knew the terrible price man paid for sin….

Death being the ultimate wage of sin!

He saw the hurt and sorrow of a fallen world and it says that…. **he was deeply moved in His spirit!**

John 11:33 (KJS) When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit!

**1690 embrimaomai {em-brim-ah'-om-ahee}**

**(to snort with anger); groan 2, murmur against**

brim-ah'-om-ahee, Groan Literally means; to snort with anger

What would Jesus have been snorting in anger at? What made His spirit literally groan within Him?

The havoc that Satan had caused when he incited mankind to sin and fall from God’s grace! Satan, through the temptation, bringing sickness, sorrow, suffering, pain and death into Gods perfect creation! And man allowing themselves to be duped by Satan’s lies!

You can almost hear Jesus say in His groaning, Father, this is not what we intended!

Jesus saw how far we had fallen, what sin had cost us and it caused His heart to break for us and He wept!

Do you want to see the ultimate example of Jesus “getting into the game”?

Picture Him in the garden the night of His betrayal.

He knows what is about to happen to Him so He asks His closest friends to stay up and pray with Him.. They can’t stay awake, they keep falling asleep….offering no support to Him.

Picture Jesus praying to the Father as the sins of the world start to come down upon His shoulders…The one who knew no sin becoming a sin sacrifice for us…

We can feel His anguish as He prays! He is praying so intently, so earnestly that the blood vessels and corpuscles underneath his skin start to rupture and it appears as if He is sweating great drops of blood! And then as He cries out in earnest to the Father:

**Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me!!**

**Never the less, not My will but Your will be done!**

I have never seen or heard of an armchair quarterback get so emotionally involved in a game that they would literally sweat blood! (They may make someone else bleed but not themselves)

Jesus did get that emotionally involved in our redemption! He literally sweats blood!

You can’t get any more into the game then Jesus did!

Then picture Jesus as He is handing on the cross…

Exhausted, Dehydrated, Bleeding, suffering more than anyone on this planet has ever suffered!

He looks down at the soldiers who pierced his hands and feet with the nails, the soldiers who spat on Him and mocked Him and whipped and beat Him; and He sees the crowd, many who were in the courtyard yelling Crucify Him! Crucify Him!

And then with some of His last breath He cries out to God….

**Father, forgive them, for they don’t know what they are doing!**

Lee Strobel said: When you read the New Testament in the original Greek in which it is written, you see it suggests by the imperfect tense of the Greek that Jesus didn’t just say it once, but he kept repeating it all through the torture of the crucifixion.

While the nails are being driven through his hands, while the nails which were being driven through his feet, he kept praying “*Father, forgive them. Father, forgive them. Father, forgive them for they don’t know what they do.*”

Jesus’ prayers for people so spiritually depraved they were torturing to death the son of God continued right up until his final gasps, and as pastor John Stott said, in light of that, how can we justify not praying consistently and fervently and expectantly for lost people in our lives?

Folks, that’s “getting into the game”!

As I said at the beginning, when it comes to the things that we love…Football, basketball, baseball, golf, romantic movies, good novels, whatever it may be, we find it easy to “get into the game”!

We find that we can emotionally transfer ourselves onto the playing field!

But do we have that same zeal in our relationship with the Lord? Do we get that much “into the Game” of our relationship with Christ?

Do we get that much “into the game” when it comes to winning lost souls to Christ?

If we are a Christian, if we have received Jesus as the Lord and Savior of our life then God has called us to “get into the Game”. To become emotionally involved in our relationship with Him and emotionally involved in the Spiritual battles that are taking place all around us!

**2Cor 5:17 (NIV) Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!**

**18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation:**

**19 that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.**

20 We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.

**21 God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.**

**6:1 As God's fellow workers we urge you not to receive God's grace in vain.**

This is how we are to “get into the game”! This is the transference that is to take place in our lives the day that we are saved!

**2Cor 5:17 (NIV) Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!**

It is what Paul meant when he said:

Gala 2:20 (NKJV) "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the [life] which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

You see, to get into the game of our Christianity there needs to be a transference that takes place!

We need to transfer ourselves onto the playing field and get emotionally involved in the game!

We do that by placing ourselves “in Christ”.

**Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!**

It is no longer, may my will be done, but from now on God may your will be done in my life as I yield, as I surrender, my will to the will of Christ!

It is coming to the place that Paul did when he said:

**I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live but Christ lives in me!**

That is what the term “in Christ” literally means!

To envelop, to saturate oneself in Jesus by literally exchanging, transferring our will for His will!

Once we do that, once we place ourselves “in Christ” we have this promise of Scripture…

**Colo 2:9 (NIV) *For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form,***

**10 and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority.**

***For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form,***

If we have placed ourselves “in Christ” through surrender of our will to His will, then all the fullness of the Deity (God) lives in bodily form! The form of our body!

We are given the fullness of God in these bodies of clay as we place ourselves “in Christ”!

And as Christ was “into the game” so should we be, if we are truly “in Him”.

Church, God has given us our emotions and our passions…

What is it that we get emotional and get passionate about?

Just the things of this world that have only temporal significance or the things of God that have eternal significance?

Are we as passionate about seeing the injustices of this world done away with as we are about that football game or basketball game or baseball game or that romantic movie or novel?

Do we get as excited about righteousness as Jesus did?

Do we get as excited about seeing lost souls brought into the Kingdom of God as we do seeing our team win a big game?

Are we “into the game” enough to have a burden for the lost?

A burden that is so great that we will do all within our power, all within our means to reach just one more lost soul for Jesus before it is too late for them to do so?

**1Pet 4:1 (NIV) Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude because he who has suffered in his body is done with sin.**

**2 As a result, he does not live the rest of his earthly life for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God.**

This morning how “into the game” are you? Have you armed yourself; are you arming yourself, with the mind, the attitude of Christ?

Are we living our lives in the will of God?