

Title: Keep Your Head in the Game: Living with Bold Faith and Unwavering Commitment to Christ

Sermon Summary: This sermon challenges believers to maintain their spiritual focus and commitment to Christ regardless of circumstances, using the analogy of keeping one's head in the game during athletic competition. The pastor emphasizes that following Jesus requires complete surrender and boldness, not just convenient religious observance. Drawing from the early church's example in Acts, the message highlights how the apostles rejoiced even in persecution because they understood that true victory is measured by eternal rewards, not earthly comfort. The sermon calls Christians to move beyond cultural Christianity to authentic faith that changes lives and boldly proclaims Christ, trusting that God's plan prevails even when circumstances appear difficult.

Key Points:

- Jesus never tempted people to follow Him but clearly stated the high cost of discipleship, requiring complete surrender and forsaking all
- Changed people change people; genuine transformation in believers attracts others to Christ more than religious words
- The early church prayed for boldness to speak God's word and performed miracles, demonstrating that obedience to God precedes the fullness of the Holy Spirit
- Rejoicing always means praising God regardless of circumstances, including persecution and hardship
- True repentance is not just feeling sorry but turning away from sin and pursuing what God wants
- Christians should measure success by eternal rewards, not earthly comfort or approval
- Boldness in faith means being willing to speak about Jesus even when inconvenient or uncomfortable
- We are invincible until God's appointed time, so we should live without fear and trust His protection
- The game of life is not about personal achievement but about serving

Christ as King with complete devotion

Scripture Reference:

- Acts 4:27-31 (Prayer for boldness and God shaking the place)
- Acts 5:11-42 (Apostles performing miracles, arrest, miraculous release, flogging, and rejoicing)
- Acts 21 (Paul's determination to go to Rome despite warnings)
- 2 Corinthians 4, 5, and 6 (Living by faith, not by sight)
- Matthew 28 (Great Commission - going into all the world)
- 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 (Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances)

Stories:

- The account of Nicodemus being confused by Jesus's teaching about being born again
- Ananias and Sapphira lying to the Holy Spirit and falling dead, bringing fear to the church
- Peter's shadow healing people as crowds brought the sick into the streets
- The apostles being arrested, miraculously freed by an angel, returning to preach, then being flogged and rejoicing
- Gamaliel's speech about previous failed movements and warning not to fight against God
- Personal story about a coworker wanting to attend church because he saw genuine change in a believer's life
- Softball game illustration about a ragtag team defeating the fire department team in a championship by playing together and not losing heart despite being behind