

RUN FOR JESUS! (2)

Isaiah 40: 27-31 – Pastor Richard P. Carlson
Youth Snow Retreat – Uinta Youth Camp, Meeks Cabin 2011

How many of you have seen the movie, “Chariots Of Fire?” The movie is an outstanding movie about a Christian young man, Eric Liddell. The year the film focuses on is 1924, when Eric was scheduled to race in a pre-heat qualifying in the Paris Olympics. Eric firmly believed that running on Sunday would be a violation of the Lord’s Day. Eric Liddell was doubtless the fastest man alive in 1924. He was the hands down favorite to win the gold medal for Britain in the 100 metre race. Many players, coaches and the press tried to talk Eric into running, as did the Prince of Wales, but Eric refused. Eric missed the pre-heat qualifying. He went to the Scottish Presbyterian church in Paris. When asked to speak, Eric’s text was our text this morning from Isaiah 40: 27-31. Eric focused his timely message on “Yet those who wait for the Lord, will gain new strength...They will run and not grow weary, they will run and not get tired or exhausted...” Through a fellow British team mate who wanted the world to see Eric run, Eric was given a chance to run the 400 metre race, though he was only trained for the 100 metre run. He had never run the 400 metre race before. You may remember from the movie, that a fast runner from America named Schultz, handed Eric a tiny note before the race with I Samuel 2: 30 on it. It read, “Those who honor Me, I will honor.” No doubt about it, God honored Eric Liddell before the watching world in those 1924 Paris Olympics. He ran the 400 metre run at a 100 metre pace. To all the experts who watched him head out in that pace, they screamed that it was too fast, that he would tire and fade to last place in the race. But God honored His Word. Eric won the race going away for a new world record. “Those who wait for the Lord will gain new strength; they will mount up with wings like eagles, they will run and not get tired...” I cry when I watch the movie. Eric Liddell throws his head back and lifts his eyes to God as he runs and no one could stop him or overtake him. God keeps His Word. It moves me afresh today to claim God’s Word.

Today, let’s focus on running for God. The qualifying heat for Eric was not about the Sunday race, but about Eric’s waiting upon the Lord on His Day. Eric gave up his lifetime chance at winning an Olympic gold medal. God miraculously restored Eric’s chance to win a gold medal and he did. We talked about waiting on the Lord last night. We need to go back to that word “wait” in verse 31 of Isaiah 40. Waiting on God to fly for Him is all about **qavah** and so it is true of running and walking for Jesus. **Qavah** is the

Hebrew word for wait. It is unique. It means to braid or bind together by twisting. It means to collect into one focus, to look for God, straining our mind in His direction with an expectant attitude—with a forward look of assurance. We so often desire control. We don't want God's timing. We dislike listening to our parents or pastors. We want to call the shots. God is calling us this morning by His Spirit, saying to us, "Braid your faith and your love for Me into a cord of hope. Braid your faith and love, along with your doubts and fears, into one braid of crying out to Me alone, saying, "Lord, I believe. Help my unbelief. Here I come. Make me fast, Lord. I'm listening to Your voice. I'm running in Your time, not my way. I'm braided in my will and in my spirit to You, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. I'm bound to You, Jesus. I untie myself to my will and my control. I'm running for You and Your will. Amen."

Today, I want us to examine what it means to run for Jesus in 2011. I suggest six meanings that running requires if our race is to be run for the Lord. Each of these meanings is vital if we wait for the Lord, and find our lives braided in waiting for Him and His signal of 1, 2, 3, Go! The Hebrew word for run is **ruwts**. It literally means to stretch out and flat out--book it—to rush speedily or run swiftly as a footman. It means to run and not run out of gas, getting tired, fading and falling out of the race. Now, the Word of God shows us 6 meanings of this word **ruwts**. In the context of the Word, we find six examples of how God would have us to run for Him. What are these six vital meanings?

RUNNING FOR JESUS MEANS HASTENING VERY QUICKLY TOWARDS OUR GOAL AND TOWARDS OUR LORD. (I.) Let's open the Word of God and find how God wants us to run to Him and run to do His bidding, what He calls us to do. In Genesis 18: 1, 2, 7, we read of God appearing to Abraham as three men, for God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit." Let's read it. "Now the Lord appeared to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre, while he was sitting at the tent door in the heat of the day. And when Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, behold, three men were standing opposite him; and when he saw them, he ran—**ruwts** from the tent door to meet them, and bowed himself to the earth... Abraham also ran—**ruwts** to the herd, and took a tender and a choice calf, and gave it to the servants; and he hurried to prepare it." Imagine the scene on a hot sultry day by the oaks of Mamre, maybe 90 to 100 degrees Fahrenheit. Somehow Abraham was so tapped into God that he knew the three men were God in a theophany, in a pre-incarnate state, coming as three men, Father, Son, and

Holy Spirit to visit him at his tent. Young people, when God comes to see you, when you know He is speaking to you, run to Him. Run to serve Him. Don't lounge in the shade. Get up, get moving, run to Jesus. In Psalm 68:31, **ruwts** means to quickly stretch out your hands to God. In that context, David says Ethiopia "will **ruwts**—quickly stretch out her hands to God." The literal picture is that Ethiopia will run to submit to God. So this first meaning is to run to God and run with arms outstretched to serve Him. Secondly,

RUNNING FOR JESUS MEANS AN ALL-OUT RACE TO WIN FOR HIM. (II.) There are times when **ruwts**, running for Jesus is a hundred yard dash running like the wind, hair blown back, nike's digging in, and our eye on the tape at the finish line. **Ruwts** is used this way in Joshua 8: 19 where Israel took the city of Ai in their second attack. You may remember God's plan for Joshua to go up against Ai and they were to pretend to be beaten. Then Ai's leaders called for the city to be cut loose to come after Israel, until not one man was left in Ai to guard the city. "Then the Lord said to Joshua, "Stretch out the javelin that is in your hand toward Ai, for I will give it into your hand. So Joshua stretched out the javelin that was in his hand toward the city. And the men in ambush (took the signal) rose quickly from their place, and when Joshua had stretched out his hand, they ran (**ruwts**) and entered the city and captured it. They quickly set the city on fire." Paul speaks in the same way in I Corinthians 9: 24, saying, "Run in such a way that you may win." This kind of running isn't looking over your shoulder. It means a sprint for God to win a battle over the enemy. When your parents ask you to do a chore for them, I dare you, the next time you are asked to run, to do it. It will be an eye-opener for you and for them that will change the complexion of your home. They won't know what to do with you, it will so surprise them. I will never forget it as long as I live. I was in Pinedale, Wyoming on vacation. We went to a church there where Phil Tubbs, a layman, very important at Red Cliff Bible Camp, was asked to speak. He ran from the back of the church to preach. When he made it to the pulpit, he had something important to say. Not long after this day, Phil Tubbs died in a sudden automobile crash. I went to his funeral. The governor of Wyoming gave a special permission for him to be buried beside the camp he loved at Red Cliff. Phil flat out ran to win for Jesus. Do we? Thirdly,

RUNNING FOR JESUS MEANS CHARGING INTO BATTLE FOR GOD IN MILITARY ARRAY. (III.) Job speaks of a man rushing headlong at the Lord, **ruwts**. (Job 15: 26) That's a fatal mistake. The way we

are to charge for Jesus is to run against the enemy. This is pictured by David in the day God delivered him from King Saul. In II Samuel 22: 30, David said, “For by Thee I can run, **ruwts** upon a troop; By my God I can leap over a wall.” Jesus said in Matthew 16: 18, “I will build My church, and the gates of Hades or hell will not overpower it.” This isn’t a picture of Hell failing to burst down the walls of the church, but it is rather a portrait of the church of Jesus rushing against the walls of hell and of hell being unable to withstand the advance of the onrushing church. Fourthly,

RUNNING FOR JESUS MEANS RUNNING AWAY FROM SOMEONE OR SOMETHING. (IV.)

When Gideon’s 300 men blew their trumpets in the middle of the night and broke their empty pitchers with lighted torches inside them—the Midianites, who were numbered as sand by the seashore, fought and killed each other trying to run away—Judges 7: 12, 21. Do you remember this event, when Gideon’s 300 man army camp down to the Midianite camp? Do you remember how the 300 men each stood in his place around the camp of the Midianites, breaking their pitchers, blowing their trumpets and crying out, “A sword for the Lord, and for Gideon!” Well, what happened. We read in Judges 7: 21, “And each stood in his place around the camp; and all the Midianite army ran, **ruwts**, crying as they fled.” Gideon won that battle. In this case, it was the enemy that was running. In James 4: 7, we read, “Resist the devil and he will flee/run **ruwts** from you.” Sometimes, God wants us to be the runners, running from the enemy. When is that? Let me give you 4 examples in the New Testament. I Corinthians 6: 18 tells us “Flee immorality—literally pre-marital sex, run from participating in it, **ruwts**, make tracks. Don’t stand around and try to stand up to lust. Pastor Larry Johnson recently said, “Our glands are more powerful than our brains.” He’s right. II Timothy 2: 22 tells us, “Flee from youthful lusts.” In I Corinthians 10: 14, Paul says, “Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.” In I Timothy 6: 11, Paul calls us to “Flee from the love of money.” There are times to stand and fight. I will preach on that subject on Sunday morning. Don’t stand up to youthful lust, sex, porn, idolatry and loving money. Run—**ruwts** for your very life. Fifthly,

RUNNING FOR JESUS MEANS RUNNING AS AN EMISSARY OR A MISSIONARY ON A MISSION FOR HIM. (V.)

When God delivered David from his own son Absalom, who usurped the kingdom from him, Absalom was killed. One fast messenger, named Ahimaaz, the son of Zadok, begged Joab, saying, “Please let me run, **ruwts** and bring the king news that the Lord has freed him from the hand of his enemies.” The story is poignant

for two men ran that day, one man Cushie with the bad news that Absalom was dead, and Ahimaaz who wasn't sure about Absalom's welfare. There wasn't good news for king David. Young people, no matter how fast you are, don't desire to run as a missionary without knowing the good news. To run with bad news is tragic. Ask God to let you run to the lost with good news. Turn to II Samuel 18: 9-33. Read the story. God is calling us all to run for Him as heralds, ambassadors, emissaries, and missionaries with good news called the Gospel. Those who wait for the Lord, will run and not be weary. What a joy it is to run with the Gospel and see the lost receive the Lord Jesus as their personal Savior and Lord. Sixthly,

RUNNING FOR JESUS MEANS RUNNING TO OUR REFUGE AND ROCK, IN JESUS, WHERE WE CAN HIDE SAFELY. (VI.)

We sing the words of Proverbs 18: 10 which go, "The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous run ruwts into it and they are safe." This is the only safe Place we can safely run to hide. The devil has his counterfeit plans and songs. As a teenager, there was a tune that was popular. The devil is still playing this demonic song in thousands of divorces and affairs. It goes, "If somebody else can make you happier than I can make you, run to him, he'll be your love." It's a hauntingly beautiful song with a devilish strategy and demonic intent. Today I call us in our guilt and shame—"Come running to Jesus." Chris Tomlin wrote a beautiful song, picturing the prodigal son coming back home. Bow your heads as I read you these precious words, and sing the final chorus to you.

Oh heart of mine, why must you stray? From one so fair you run away
And one more time you have to pay The heaviness of needless shame

Oh heart of mine, come back home You've been too long out on your own
And He's been there all along Watching for you down the road

So come home running His arms are open wide His name is Jesus He understands
He is the answer You are looking for So come home running Just as you are

Oh child of God so dearly loved And ransomed by the Savior's blood
And called by name, daughter and son Wrapped in the robe of righteousness.

So come home running His arms are open wide His name is Jesus He understands
He is the answer You are looking for So come home running Just as you are"