

Aims:

- To reveal a theology of Chaplaincy through the Bible.
- To understand Christ's commandment and commission for us.
- To discuss how the gospel transforms us and those whom we serve.

Preface:

Sadly, many well-meaning believers have held that sport and competition are sinful and therefore Christians should not be involved in sport in any way. We do not hold that position and do not find it in the Bible. In fact, based on the First Commandment (Gen. 1:28), the Great Commandment (Matthew 22:34-40) and the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20), we believe we are to redeem every area of creation. See the PDF on the website for more detailed information.

Why is a Biblical Foundation Important?

- It is vital to understand God's Mission in the World.
- It is essential that we have a living relationship with Christ before we strive to lead others.
- Starting anywhere besides the Scripture means we are building on the wrong and a weak foundation.

If we do not understand God's Mission:

- We will miss God's love demonstrated in Jesus' perfect life, humiliating and sacrificial death and glorious life-giving resurrection, his desire to gather worshippers from every tribe and nation.

If you do not start with Scripture:

- **You will naturally follow your own wisdom**
 - “For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength.” I Corinthians 1:25
- **You will serve yourself and it will be all about you!**
 - “Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” Matthew 20:28

1. John 21 → How does the life of Christ influence Sports Chaplains?
2. The Calling/ Command → How are we to be obedient to the Great Commission?
3. The Gospel → What are the key elements and results of Conversion?

Biblical Foundation of Sports Chaplaincy

- Any Biblical foundation for Sports Chaplaincy/Mentoring **starts with the Bible** and more specifically with the life of Jesus Christ.
- His Mission is our mission.
- Our passion, our calling needs to come from Jesus and it needs to be rooted in Scripture.

Section 1. John 21

Read: John 21:1-3

*After this, Jesus revealed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias, and he revealed himself in this way. 2 Simon Peter, Thomas (called the Twin), Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples were together. 3 Simon Peter said to them, “**I am going fishing.**” They said to him, “We will go with you.”*

Key point:

- Peter is at a critical time in his life, Jesus died and although he has seen him in his resurrected body – everything is different. So he desires to do something he knows he can control – fish. He grew up on this lake, his Dad taught him how to fish, and he can always be a fisherman!

Read: John 21:3b

*“They went out and got into the boat, but that night **they caught nothing.**”*

Key points:

- Anything you think you can do in your own strength and skill can be frustrated by God!
- The miracle of catching no fish.

Read: John 21:4-5

“4 Just as day was breaking, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. 5 Jesus said to them, “Children, do you have any fish?” They answered him, “No.”

Key point:

- It is frustrating to be reminded of failure, especially when what you’re doing is for emotional control.

Read: John 21:6

“6 He said to them, “Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some.” So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in, because of the quantity of fish.”

Key points:

- There is great humor here – “throw the net on the other side of the boat, O skilled fisherman!”
Even funnier, he does it!
- The miracle of catching fish! 153 keepers
- The joy of catching fish but frustration that they needed advice from a nameless voice from the beach.

Read: John 21:7-12

“7 That disciple whom Jesus loved therefore said to Peter, “It is the Lord!” When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment, for he was stripped for work, and threw himself into the sea. 8 The other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, but about a hundred yards off.

9 When they got out on land, they saw a charcoal fire in place, with fish laid out on it, and bread. 10 Jesus said to them, “Bring some of the fish that you have just caught.” 11 So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, 153 of them. And although there were so many, the net was not torn.”

Key points:

- God was there all the time but sometimes we need to be reminded, and reminded! And reminded and we need to remind those we serve.

Read: John 21:12-14

“12 Jesus said to them, “Come and have breakfast.” Now none of the disciples dared ask him, “Who are you?” They knew it was the Lord. 13 Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and so with the fish. 14 This was now the third time that Jesus was revealed to the disciples after he was raised from the dead.”

Key points:

- Jesus does not start with a lecture or a rebuke; they were not physically, spiritually or emotionally ready for that.
- He feeds them and gives them rest.

Read: John 21:15-17

“15 When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” He said to him, “Feed my lambs.” 16 He said to him a second time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” He said to him, “Tend my sheep.” 17 He said to him the third time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, “Do you love me?” and he said to him, “Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Feed my sheep.”

Key points:

- Peter had warmed up to another fire – a fire of three denials (John 18:15-27), after saying he would never fall away.
- Now he warms up to a fire of acceptance, honesty and commission.

Key concepts for a Theology of Sports Chaplaincy:

- We represent the presence of God, knowing God is present in every situation.
(Incarnation)

- We need to be there! Did you notice Jesus came to them where they were? (**Ministry of Presence**)
- They recognized Jesus, our athletes need to know us. (**Relational Ministry**)
- Jesus points out “No fish”. We need to be honest when we see God is trying to get their attention. We need to recognize this (**Teachable Moments**).
- Jesus knew when they were ready to listen, not when they were hungry and tired. He fed them first and let them rest. (**Wisdom, Servanthood and Love**)
- We must call those we serve to make more than a decision, but also to the great joy found in following Jesus where he wants them to go. (**Discipleship**)

Discussion / Reflection #1

Read Mark 6:30-44

“34 When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things.”

- How do the disciples see the crowd?
- How does Jesus see the crowd?
- How did Jesus respond to the crowd?
- What was the crowd's perspective?

Section 2. The Great Commandment and Great Commission

As Sport Chaplains/Mentors, we use sports as a bridge to accomplish what God has called us to do.

What exactly has God called us to do?

If we are not sure or wrong about our calling, then that will certainly affect the ministry we are involved in as Sports Chaplains.

QUIZ TIME:

Read the following Bible verses. What is the main action?

*“And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. **19** Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **20** teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” Matthew 28*

- 90% of people say “Going” is the main action

But that is the wrong answer. There’s only one main action in that whole sentence.

It is **‘make disciples.’**

**Making Disciples – God’s Commission**

- If we ignored “**Going**” or “**Teaching**” we would reduce the purpose that Jesus intends.

The tendency is to forget baptizing.

Sports Chaplains/Mentors need to be connected to the Local Church

- The core meaning of the Biblical word “baptizing” includes being a part of a local life-giving, Bible believing church.
- People of Sport need to be continually taught, encouraged and vitally involved now and long after they cannot play the sport. God established the church to do just that, and it has been working for thousands of years!
- We do a great dis-service and harm, if we do not include the whole concept of baptizing into our understanding, and practically into our ministries!

Questions:

Could our ministries actually be communicating that the church is not important?

- Are you involved in a local church?
- Do you believe that what you are doing replaces the local church in God’s mind?
- What are you doing to point people of sport into the Church in a meaningful way?

Discussion/Reflection #2**Read Matthew 22:37-39**

“37 And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. 38 This is the great and first commandment. 39 And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

- Why is ‘love God’ first and ‘love neighbors’ second?
- Why did God have to command us to love God and others? Shouldn’t it be natural?
- How can you “love your neighbor as yourself”?

Reflection:

- List three ways to love others that you are not doing now.

Section 3. Biblical Foundation of Conversion

Conversion/salvation is defined as **Faith** and **Repentance**, both must be involved, and it applies to those in need of Christ and those that have received Jesus as Savior.

- *1 Peter 2 ²⁴ He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.”*
- *1 John 1:8-9 “If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”*

Notice below how **Faith** and **Repentance** are involved.

- *Isaiah 55* “⁶ Seek the LORD while he may be found; call on him while he is near. ⁷ Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the LORD, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will freely pardon. ⁸ “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the LORD.”

See the PDF document on the website with “3 Aspects included in Conversion / Salvation” and “The Gospel”

Discussion/Reflection #3

Read 1 Corinthians 9:24

“24 Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it.”

Reflection:

- Reflect on the ways this passage inspires us to live out the word of God.
- Paul used sport to reveal truth about life. Give three examples from your sport that do the same thing, revealing a truth about life.

Credits:

- Portions of the Gospel diagram are adapted from material developed by Tom Wood in his Gospel Coaching teaching. Used with permission. Adapted by Ken Cross
- The John 21 material was originally used by the Sports Chaplains Network in their training materials.