

THE BIG IDEA: We reach for what we value.

### The Take-Off

As we move closer to the end of what has been an incredible series, we're going to examine a pretty powerful passage of scripture that is going to lead to our ninth word in the 10 Series.

To this point, we've talked about a lot of words with 10 in them: intentional, contentment, attention, tension, consistency, tenacious, potential and straightened.

This morning, we're going to focus on the word "extended"

Let's go ahead and read 2 verses found in John. (John is the 4th book of the New Testament, so if you find Matthew, just move a few books to the right and you've got John)

We're going to be reading John 12:32-33

The context of this amazing statement about Jesus being able to draw all men to himself is critical for us. He isn't talking about a Bible study or a Sunday School class. He isn't talking about a church service. He's speaking about his death on the cross, and so we have to ask a simple question: "How high was the cross lifted?"

The answer may surprise you in its simplicity: "All the way."

See, on the cross, Jesus was fully extended, and as his disciples, we must live fully extended, too.

Now, let's make sure we have the right image of what a fully extended life looks like before we dive into this.

On January 10, 1982, the SF 49ers hosted the Dallas Cowboys in the NFC Championship game.

Trailing 27-21, the 49ers took over the ball at their own 11 yard line w/ under 5 minutes to play.

Joe Montana methodically drove them down the field until, with :58 left, they face 3rd and goal at the Dallas 6.

The play was a pass to Freddie Solomon, but as Montana rolled out, he found himself under a heavy rush and Solomon was nowhere to be found.

[Show the first image - the pass]

Montana threw the ball to the back of the end zone where he knew the tight end would be, but his pass was extremely high.

But Dwight Clark made a play that went down in NFL lore known simply as "The Catch" and was immortalized in countless pictures just like this one showing the fully extended Clark catching the pass with his fingertips that gave the 49ers a 28-27 win.

[Show the second image - the catch]

This is the image I want burned in our minds this morning as we talk about living fully extended lives.

### 1. An extended life is one of DEPENDANCE

When we fully extend ourselves, we expose ourselves, too

Obviously, when Dwight Clark fully extended himself to make "The Catch" he was depending on a number of things

- that the trainers would be able to fix him if he got hurt
- that the 49ers would reward him financially for taking the risk
- that his teammates had done what was necessary to protect him
- that the coaches had drawn up a play designed to take the danger away from where he would be

It's no different for any of us, even though we don't play professional sports

If we are going to live an extended life, we will have to take a risk and trust God

Proverbs 2:8

We have to trust God because when we live fully extended lives, we are at our most productive and our most vulnerable.

Question to consider: are you living your life in a way that gives God something to protect?

Does the extended life always work out like we want?

No, because an extended life is also a life full of difficulties

### 2. An extended life is one of DIFFICULTIES

Turn to 2 Corinthians 11:23-28 and take a look at all the stuff that happened to Paul as he lived a life fully extended in ministry.

- He was imprisoned
- He was flogged 5 times
- He was exposed to death

- He was beaten with rods 3 times
- He was stoned
- He was shipwrecked 3 times
- He was on the open sea for a day and a night
- He was constantly on the move
  - Wendy and I selling our 8 month old house
  - Maybe Paul was on the move so he'd still be alive
- He was in danger (rivers, bandits, his countrymen, Gentiles, city, county, at sea, false brothers)
- He worked a lot and slept a little
- He was hungry
- He was thirsty
- He often went without food
  - Not having a pantry without your favorite snack food
  - Having a pantry without food
- He was cold
- He was naked
- He was burdened for the very thing that caused him to experience all these difficulties

With all that he faced, Paul didn't spend his time complaining as much as reigning, and it's because he saw the eternal perspective in it all

### 3. An extended life is one of **DISCERNMENT**

Discernment can be a lot of things, but one simple definition is that it allows us to see the WHY behind the WHAT  
 Discernment allows us to keep the right perspective

It challenges our assumptions and replaces them with awareness

The technical term for this process is "experiencing a paradigm shift"

- the man on the subway with the wild children
- Tom and Harry at Camp Lotsafun
- seeing the WHY behind the WHAT replaces our assumptions with awareness

Paul wasn't just experiencing difficulties; he had the discernment to see that they were working in him to produce even more of Christ's power

When you and I face hard times, we're doing more than just facing hard times! We're being broken even more so that more of God's power can be revealed in our weaknesses.

2 Corinthians 12:9-10

Is it easy? Absolutely not. In fact, it may be the hardest step of all.

It would be easy to lower our lives, to assume a more protective mode. It would be easy to never extend again.

I remember asking Wendy's dad if he would bless our marriage and hearing him say, "No."

- We chose to wait until he said yes
- We didn't have to, right? We were adults!
- But an extended life endures difficulties because it can see with discernment what's really going on
- I wanted to marry Wendy, for sure, but I also wanted to honor her father because I want to see him become a follower of Jesus

Living a life like that - extended, exposed, expecting - requires discipline

### 4. An extended life is one of **DISCIPLINE**

1 Corinthians 9:22 is a great verse about the extended life

It's also one of the most misused verses about the extended life

Paul says that he has become all things to all men so that by all possible means he might save some

We read that and say, "Woo hoo!! I don't have to quit drinking!! I can be a drunk to the drunks!"

It's so easy to read verse 19-21 and think that Paul did whatever he wanted, and honestly, who wouldn't sign up for that, right?

But this passage isn't about that at all!

It's about living lives full of the discipline to say no to good things in order to say yes to greater things

Paul was an example of this:

- He had rights (1 Corinthians 9:1)

- He laid them down (1 Corinthians 9:15)
- He lived with discipline (1 Corinthians 9:24-27, esp. 27)

#### 5. An extended life is one of **DESIRE**

This desire isn't a natural one, so don't feel bad if you aren't jumping on the seats to sign up!

Even Jesus wrestled with the idea of living an extended life:

- Matthew 26:36-39
- "Let this cup pass" is the prayer of a man who understands the cost of the extended life
- "Not my will but yours" is the prayer of a man who understands the benefit of the extended life

At some point, we all have to ask ourselves what we truly desire

In Philippians 3:13-14, Paul said that he desired what he was reaching for more than what he had let go of

For Dwight Clark, making "The Catch" was more desirable than any pain he might have endured

So at the end of the day, radical followers of Jesus aren't choosing pain because they like it, but because it is worth it in order to get what they desire the most: the glory of God through them and to men

When that becomes our all-consuming desire, we'll find that our desire draws others to us, and often at times when we aren't at our best

Jesus experienced this.

3 times in the Bible we read about times when Jesus attracted a crowd immediately after he had fully extended himself in ministry:

- Matthew 8:1 (he had just preached the best sermon ever recorded)
- Mark 5:21 (he had just finished up an exorcism)
- Luke 9:37 (he had just experienced the full power of God in his body)

Desire is contagious, and when you and I live a life extended toward God and others because of our passion for God and others, we will attract God and others!

When we go all in, we draw others in, too.

- Wendy getting up at the wedding to see her parents dance
  - When Wendy and I kiss at home, our kids laugh and act sick - but then they always look to see if we'll do it again
- Want to attract others to Jesus? Live a life fully extended for Jesus.

#### The Landing

We've talked about a lot, and you and I have plenty to think about, so let's boil this down to the one Big Idea: we **reach for what we value**

I like to picture it as "The Pocket Test." What amount of money on the ground will cause you to take your hands out of your pockets to pick it up? \$20? \$10? A quarter? A dime? A penny?

We reach for things when we value them.

On the cross, Jesus was extended both vertically and horizontally, and we must be, too.

Vertically, we fully extend our lives towards Jesus when we value him.

Spiritual disciplines - even though they can be hard at times - are always worth it because we reach for what we value.

Horizontally, we fully extend our lives to men when we value their souls.

Serving - even though it can be tiring at times - is always worth it because we value the souls of men.

In Matthew 20:28, Jesus made an interesting statement when 2 of his disciples wanted to sit down and rule over men.

Jesus said that they were to serve just as he had come to serve.

Saved hearts serve.

Why? Because when we value what the cross meant for us, how it changed us, it becomes an HONOR to serve!

The redeemed life is a fully extended life, reaching for what it values.

That life will do whatever it takes to live near God and near man, and will see the promise of John 12:32 fulfilled:

when we fully extend the message of the cross in our lives to those around us, when we lift Jesus all the way up before men, God will draw them to himself

Make the catch.

Extend your lives up and out and serve your King and the souls he brings into his kingdom.