Date: 9/19/15

Title: Finish the Race

Theme: Don’t let anything distract you from finishing the race.

Object: Running shoes; stop watch on phone.

Text: Philippians 3:13-14 But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

Here Paul is thinking that being a Christian is like being in a race.

God has sent His Son, Jesus, to die on the cross for our sins.

And when we trust Jesus and ask God to forgive our sins, He does, and He puts us in the race that ends in heaven.

And Paul is describing here how he runs this race: He’s running with no distractions.

He’s not looking back over his shoulder to see how everybody else is doing.

He’s not looking to the side to see who’s watching the race.

His whole attention is focused on that finish line. He won’t allow anything to distract him.

And if he finishes the Christian’s race, his prize will be a home forever in heaven with Jesus!!!!

Now lots of people like to run. I’ve brought my running shoes with me today [show shoes]

These shoes are really light and they are designed to help you run really fast.

Now there’s another thing you need if you’re going to be in a race: a stop watch [show phone SW]

[Tick off time of about 10 sec as the time it takes a good runner to run the 100 yard dash]

[Tick off about 40 sec acting out distractions by looking behind and finding a friend in the audience]

Do you think I would win the race with that kind of time? What happened? (I was distracted)

Paul says, don’t let anything distract you from winning the race in the Christian life and getting the prize.

Look around at our church today. Where have all the people gone. There used to be many more that came to church.

You know what I think happened to them? (They got distracted.)

Maybe some kids got up on Sabbath morning and turned on the TV.

And they said, “O look! Sponge Bob’s on TV.” They got distracted.

Instead of coming to church to worship God, they stayed home and watched TV.

Or maybe there was a parent who used to come to church, but they got distracted.

They said, “I have to work on Sabbath because I have to make the car payment and pay the rent and buy food, and I don’t have time to go to church. They got distracted.

Satan will use all kinds of things to try to distract us from the goal of finishing the race.

He’ll try to use your friends to distract you.

Girls, he’ll try to use boys to distract you.

Boys, he’ll try to use girls to distract you.

He’ll try to use drugs and alcohol and entertainment and movies and rock music to distract you.

But don’t give in. Don’t give up. Don’t drop out of the race. Don’t be distracted.

Because there is nothing that is better than the prize you will get for finishing the race.

How many want to stay in the race and win the prize of eternal life with Jesus?