

“Mountaintop experience” is an expression we use to describe those ultimate highs in life. In today’s scriptures, Moses encounters God on Mount Sinai and the disciples view Jesus’ transfiguration on a mountaintop. Both experiences offer glimpses of the awesome power and mystery of God’s presence. Yet the reality of mountaintop experiences is that we don’t live there—at some point, we have to come down. However, there is a way to sustain this mountaintop experience of God in everyday life through what I call, “End Zone Living.”

For those who are avid football fans, forgive my sacrilege on the subject. For those who don’t have a clue what the game is all about, let me sum it up in a few phrases: Two teams (For this year, my team Denver BRONCOS and Carolina PANTHERS), A ball, the end zone...Get the ball to the end zone...And get it there as many times as possible, preferably more than the other team. All the timeouts, penalties, plays and commentary are just side issues.

Now while you are trying to get the ball to the end zone there are forces fighting against you. There are tackles and fumbles. There are missed passes and failed plays. Sometimes you make a little progress. Sometimes you make a lot. Sometimes there are setbacks. But the point is to gain as much yardage as possible and push your way down the field and into the end zone. The players are living for the end zone.

That’s football. That’s the Super Bowl. But when all is said and done, it’s just a game. It’s a huge game with lots of money at stake, lots of trophies and of course the bragging rights. But in just eight months that will all be forgotten and all of the teams will start over again.

What we are doing this morning, on the other hand, is not a game. Church and genuine Christianity is not a game – it’s about eternity. Someone said, “The life on earth is living in a glimpse of eternity while pursuing eternity.” Eternity is the ultimate “end zone—the mountaintop.”

1 Timothy chapter six challenges us to “Run hard and fast in the faith. Seize the eternal life, the life you were called to.” Our challenge is to run hard and run fast and to seize...eternal life. Apostle Paul is challenging us to focus on the

end zone. We achieve this by living for God which I call “end zone living.” But there are distractions in this way of living. Here is an example.

**Video: [“Roy Riegels wrong way run in the Rose Bowl”;0:13]**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dA8ShsySc48>

In the confusion of being grabbed, shoved and tackled, the player, Reigels got turned around, and disoriented. From that time on Reigels became known as “Wrong Way Reigels,” a name he never lived down. All because he became distracted.

We can focus on Living for God through: (1) worship -we honor God; (2) mission and outreach- we touch others in God’s name; (3) evangelism - we share the Good News of Jesus Christ; (4) discipleship - we grow in our understanding of God; and (5) fellowship - we connect with others.

Today, as an example, I want to raise awareness of the victims of modern-day slavery who need to be touched by God through us. This modern-day slavery is called “Human Trafficking.” This happens every day in our country. Approximately 100,000 American children are trafficked into the commercial sex industry every year. The average age of these victims is 12-14. The Super Bowl is the largest human trafficking event in the country according to the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children.

Methodists were key leaders in ending legal slavery in the 1800s. We are being called once again in the 21<sup>st</sup> century to abolish this illegal slavery happening in our own country with our own children. What we can do now on this issue is to call the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children at 1-800-THE-LOST or just call 211 if you suspect trafficking. They work closely with the local law enforcement, FBI and social services. We can also advocate for awareness of training. Fighting against this modern-day slavery is just one of the ways of living for God.

I can’t help but notice how the Apostle Paul ended his own life here on earth. He wrote one final letter to Timothy and in it he talked about the End Zone living one more time. “I’ve run hard right to the finish, believed all the way. All that’s left now is shouting—God’s Applause!” (2 Timothy 4:7-8). He is saying, “I’ve made it to the end zone and God is cheering me on! I won!” We have that same promise if we will simply practice End Zone Living! Let’s live for God every day and make a touchdown for Christ! Amen.