

VAY Sports Fest 2026 Kick-Off – “Thy Kingdom Come” – 02/21/2026

“Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.” (Mt. 6:10-11)

Matthew 13 (ESV)

³And he told them many things in parables, saying: “A sower went out to sow... ²³As for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it. ***He indeed bears fruit and yields, some a hundred times, some sixty, and some thirty!***”

²⁴He put another parable before them, saying, “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field... ³⁰Let both grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, “Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.”

³¹He put another parable before them, saying, “The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his field.

³³He told them another parable. “The kingdom of heaven is like leaven that a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, till it was all leavened.”

⁴⁴“The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

⁴⁵“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, ⁴⁶who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it.

⁴⁷“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and gathered fish of every kind... ⁴⁹So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous

- 1) In Matthew 6:10, what two requests are we praying for, and where are they supposed to happen? If “Thy kingdom come” means God’s rule showing up, what would “Thy will be done” look like in a sports setting (practice, competition, conflict, winning/losing)?
- 2) In Matthew 13, what repeated phrase shows up again and again, and what does that suggest Jesus wants us to understand? What lessons for Kingdom Formation (disciplemaking in sports & life) can we learn from:
 - a. Parable of the 4 soils:
 - b. Parable of the wheat and the weed:
 - c. Parable of the mustard seed:
 - d. Parable of the leaven:
 - e. Parables of the hidden treasure & great pearl:
 - f. Parable of the net:
- 3) **G**rounded: What is one “soil problem” you personally relate to most?
- 4) **O**vercome Opposition: What opposition hits you hardest in sports and in life?
- 5) **A**gent of Change: What is a “leaven-like” habit you can bring to impact your environment?
- 6) **L**asting Win: What do you tend to treat as the “treasure” in sports/life that you need to “sell”?
- 7) What stage are you in in the 4-Chair journey of disciplemaking: G.O.A.L?

¹ This Sports Fest key verse is in the AMP version: “He indeed bears fruit and yields, some a hundred times, some sixty, and some thirty.”

The District Conference's Theme this year is **'Thy Kingdom Comes.'** VAY Sports Ministry this year will explore what it would mean in sports, plays, and fitness from Jesus' explanations about His kingdom from **Matthew 13.**

This is what **Thy Kingdom Come** in Sports Fest means: **we receive the Word** (soil), **we compete with integrity in a mixed field** (wheat and weeds), **we cultivate a contagious Kingdom culture** (mustard and leaven), **and we treat Jesus as the ultimate prize while living for the true finish line** (treasure and net).

2026 key verse: **'He indeed bears fruit and yields, some a hundred times, some sixty, and some thirty.'** (Mt. 13:23, AMP).

G: Grounded (Matt 13:23): Grounded means our hearts are good soil. In sports and life, the athlete who grows is coachable: he listens, receives instruction, and lets it take root until it changes how he plays. Matthew 13 says good soil hears the word and understands it, then bears fruit and yields. That is depth, not hype. When pressure rises, a grounded athlete/Christian does not panic, posture, or blame. He stays steady because his identity is not hanging on the scoreboard. Practically: choose one daily input that roots you (a short Scripture, a prayer, a truth to rehearse), and one weekly output that proves it (humility, honesty, self-control). Grounded athletes/disciplemaker train the inside so the outside can last.

O: Overcome Opposition (Matt 13:18-30): Overcome Opposition means we expect resistance without losing integrity. In Matthew 13, some seed gets snatched, scorched, or choked; in real life, faith and character get tested by pressure, distraction, and disappointment. Then Jesus shows a mixed field: wheat and weeds grow together. Sports and life feel like that. Not everyone plays by the same values, and not everyone is at the same spiritual maturity. Our call is not to become weed-pullers who judge, expose, or police people. Our call is to stay faithful, play clean, and endure. Practically: name your hardest opposition (trash talk, unfair calls, fear of failure, craving approval) and pre-decide your response: respect, self-control, and truth, even when it costs.

A: Agent of Change (Matt 13:31-33): Agent of Change means we do not just adapt to the environment; we influence it. Jesus says the kingdom is like a mustard seed that starts small but grows big, and like leaven that works quietly until it affects the whole batch. We affect our team and our culture. One athlete can spread complaining, ego, and negativity. A Christian can spread courage, encouragement, and honesty. Agents of change do not wait for leaders to fix everything. They take responsibility for what they can control: their words, effort, attitude, and presence. Practically: pick one leaven-like habit to practice during sport (build up a teammate, honor refs, etc.) and life (include the outsider, apologize quickly, refuse gossip, etc.). Small actions, repeated, can reshape the whole room.

L: Lasting Win (Matt 13:44-50): Lasting Win means we define success by what lasts. Jesus says the kingdom is like treasure and a pearl of great value: when you see it, you gladly trade lesser things to gain the greater. Then he says the kingdom is like a net, and there is a real end where things are sorted out. In sports, trophies fade, but who we become remains. A lasting win is becoming the kind of servant our King can trust: humble in win, steady in loss, clean under pressure, loving toward opponents. Practically: ask, what do I treat as my treasure in sports (status, stats, attention)? What is one thing I need to sell (ego, shortcuts, bitterness) so my life points to the greater prize and the true finish line when eternity starts?

Matthew 13 shows us how the Kingdom comes in real life. **Grounded** people yield fruit. We **Overcome Opposition** without losing our integrity. We become **Agents of Change** who spread a better culture. And we pursue a **Lasting Win** because the Kingdom is the greater prize and there is a true finish line.

VAY Sports Fest 2026 – “G.O.A.L.” – 03/14/2026

“They indeed bears fruit and yields, some a hundred times, some sixty, and some thirty” (Mt.13:23b)

Matthew 13:1–17 (ESV) - “G: GROUNDED”

¹That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. ²And great crowds gathered about him, so that he got into a boat and sat down. And the whole crowd stood on the beach. ³And he told them many things in parables, saying: “A sower went out to sow. ⁴And as he sowed, some seeds fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured them. ⁵Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and immediately they sprang up, since they had no depth of soil, ⁶but when the sun rose they were scorched. And since they had no root, they withered away. ⁷Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. ⁸Other seeds fell on good soil and produced grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. ⁹He who has ears, let him hear.” ¹⁰Then the disciples came and said to him, “Why do you speak to them in parables?” ¹¹And he answered them, “To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. ¹²For to the one who has, more will be given, and he will have an abundance, but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. ¹³This is why I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. ¹⁴Indeed, in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled that says: ‘You will indeed hear but never understand, and you will indeed see but never perceive.’ ¹⁵For this people’s heart has grown dull, and with their ears they can barely hear, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and turn, and I would heal them.’ ¹⁶But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear. ¹⁷For truly, I say to you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.”

Bible Study Discussion:

1. In verses 1-9, what stays the same, and what changes? What does that teach us about the seed and the soils?
2. Jesus says, “He who has ears, let him hear.” What is the difference between merely hearing words and truly hearing with understanding?
3. Which soil condition do you most relate to right now: hard, shallow, crowded, or receptive? Why?
4. In verses 10-17, why do the disciples ask Jesus questions? What does that show about the posture of a learner?
5. Jesus says some people can hear and still not understand. What are some modern distractions or habits that can make our hearts dull in sports, school, work, or life?
6. Verse 16 says, “Blessed are your eyes... and your ears...” Why is hearing God’s Word a privilege and not just a duty?
7. If Matthew 13:23 is the outcome - bearing fruit and yielding 100-60-30 - what do verses 1-17 say has to happen first?
8. What is one practical step you can take this week to become more grounded in God’s Word before practice, workouts, or games?

Title: “G for Grounded: 1st step in the G.O.A.L.”

Text: Matthew 13:1-17

Big Idea: *If we want to bear fruit and yield 100-60-30, we must become good soil by training our hearts to hear, receive, and understand the Word of God.*

I. The seed is good; the question is the soil (vv. 1-9)

Text Summary:

- Jesus tells a parable about one sower scattering the same seed on four kinds of soil.
- The seed is not the problem. The difference is how the soil receives it.
- Good soil receives the seed in a way that eventually produces fruit and yield.

Sports Analogy:

- Two athletes can hear the same coaching, run the same drills, and sit in the same huddle, yet grow very differently.
- The difference is often not the instruction, but the posture: coachable or closed, distracted or focused, deep or shallow.

Leader Applications:

- Train attention, not just activity: Help athletes slow down long enough to hear God, not just react to noise.
- Build a receiving posture: Encourage note-taking, asking questions, and repeating one truth before practice or games.

II. Grounded people lean in for understanding (vv. 10-13)

Text Summary:

- The disciples come closer and ask Jesus why He teaches in parables.
- Jesus explains that understanding the Kingdom is a gift, but it is received by those who keep leaning in.
- Hearing without engagement leads to dullness; hearing with hunger leads to more.

Sports Analogy:

- Growing athletes do not only listen to instructions; they ask, “Coach, what do you mean? Show me again.”
- Depth grows when learners move from passive hearing to active understanding.

Leader Applications:

- Reward curiosity: Create space for honest questions and thoughtful discussion in huddles.
- Teach for understanding: Do not assume people “got it” just because they heard it once.

III. Hearing is a blessing we must protect (vv. 14-17)

Text Summary:

- Jesus warns that hearts can grow dull, ears can become heavy, and eyes can close.
- But He also says the disciples are blessed because they see and hear what others longed for.
- Groundedness is not automatic; it must be guarded.

Sports Analogy:

- Athletes protect recovery, nutrition, and sleep because those things affect performance.
- In the same way, we must protect our spiritual attention from distractions that harden the heart.

Leader Applications:

- Identify distractions: Help athletes name the specific noises that choke their attention: comparison, social media, approval, anger, lust, fear, nonstop busyness.
- Practice a grounding rhythm: One verse, one prayer, one moment of silence before practice can begin to reshape the heart.

Conclusion: Mat 13:23 gives the outcome 100-60-30, but vv.1-17 shows where that begins: with ears that truly hear. Before there is fruit in public, there must be reception in private. Results come from good soil. Grounded athletes train their hearts to receive the Word deeply so their lives can actually yield.

VAY Sports Fest 2026 – “G.O.A.L.” – 04/18/26

“He indeed bears fruit and yields, some a hundred times, some sixty, and some thirty” (Mt. 13:23b)

Matthew 13:18-30 (ESV) – “O: Overcome Opposition”

¹⁸“Hear then the parable of the sower: ¹⁹When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is what was sown along the path. ²⁰As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, ²¹yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while, and when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately he falls away. ²²As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful. ²³As for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it. He indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty. ²⁴He put another parable before them, saying, “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field, ²⁵but while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away. ²⁶So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared also. ²⁷And the servants of the master of the house came and said to him, ‘Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have weeds?’ ²⁸He said to them, ‘An enemy has done this.’ So the servants said to him, ‘Then do you want us to go and gather them?’ ²⁹But he said, ‘No, lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them. ³⁰Let both grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, “Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.””

Bible Study Discussion:

1. Name three things that attack the seed before it can bear fruit in vv.18-23. Which of these three oppositions feels most real to you in sports or in life right now?
2. The path-soil person “does not understand” the word (v. 19). What is one specific thing (a habit, a distraction, a attitude) that keeps you from truly understanding what God is saying to you?
3. The rocky-soil person receives the word with joy but “has no root” (v. 21) and falls away under tribulation. What does “having root” look like for an athlete? What helps you stay rooted?
4. The thorny-soil person is choked by ordinary things: cares and riches (v. 22). What “thorns” are growing in your own schedule, social media, or ambitions that are quietly crowding out the Word?
5. In vv.24-30, Jesus adds a second picture: wheat and weeds growing in the same field. Not everyone holds the same values. How does knowing that affect the way you compete and relate to others?
6. The servants want to pull the weeds immediately, but the master says no (v. 29). What is the danger in becoming a “weed-puller” rather than staying focused on your own faithfulness?
7. Together, vv. 18-23 show internal opposition (your own soil condition) and vv. 24-30 show external opposition (the mixed field around you). Which kind of opposition is harder to deal with, and why?
8. The call in this passage is not to avoid opposition but to endure it without losing integrity. Name your hardest opposition right now: trash talk, unfair calls, fear of failure, craving approval, etc. and *pre-decide* your response. What will it be?

Title: “O for Overcome Opposition: 2nd step in the G.O.A.L.” **Text:** Matthew 13:18-30

Big Idea: *Overcoming opposition means we expect resistance (from an enemy who snatches, pressure that scorches, the world that chokes, and from a mixed field where not everyone plays by the same values) and we respond not with retaliation or retreat, but with faithfulness, integrity, and endurance.*

I. Some opposition attacks the Word directly: snatch, scorch, and choke (vv. 18-23)

Text Summary: - Jesus identifies three forces that target faith before it can bear fruit: the evil one snatches the unguarded word (v. 19); tribulation and persecution scorch the rootless believer (vv.20-21); and the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word in a cluttered heart (v. 22).

- These are three distinct kinds of opposition, each requiring a different kind of readiness.
- The good-soil person in v. 23 is not exempt from these but overcomes by hearing and understanding deeply.

Sports Analogy: - Three things attack an athlete’s growth: an opponent steals your confidence with trash talk (snatch); a hard loss or injury causes despair and quitting (scorch); or a full schedule of school, social media, and ambition squeezes out time for anything that matters (choke).

- Naming which opposition hits you hardest is the first step to preparing a real response.

Leader Applications: - Name it out loud: In your next huddle, ask athletes to identify which of the three forms of opposition (snatch, scorch, choke) is most active in their life right now.

- Build roots before the storm: Rooted athletes do not get surprised by pressure. Help your team practice spiritual and mental resilience before tribulation arrives, not during it.

II. Opposition surrounds you: the mixed field where not everyone plays by the same values (vv. 24-30)

Text Summary: - Jesus adds a second picture: a good field invaded by weeds sown by an enemy while we slept. The problem is not one bad seed but a whole field where good and corrupt growth coexist.

- The master refuses the servants purging the field immediately: premature judgment uproots the wheat.
- Our call is not to police the field but to keep growing faithfully until God sorts the harvest

Sports Analogy: - Every team and church has members who cut corners, trash talk, cheat, or operate from worldly values. That is the mixed field.

- We want to be a “weed-puller”: judging, exposing, or retaliating. But that posture almost always uproots our own witness and focus.
- Playing clean in a mixed field is harder than in a pure field, and that is exactly why it matters.

Leader Applications: - Teach the difference between *boundaries* and *judgment*: Athletes can refuse to participate in wrong behavior without becoming the moral police of everyone around them.

- Model endurance: Share story of integrity in a “mixed field” setting.

III. The response to all opposition is the same: pre-decide your integrity (vv. 18-30)

Text Summary: - Across both passages, the pattern is clear: opposition is certain, but collapse is not. The snatched, scorched, and choked soils all had the same seed; what differed was preparation and depth.

- The wheat endures the mixed field not by fighting the weeds but by being wheat: deeply rooted, growing steadily, trusting the harvest to the master.
- Overcome Opposition is not about winning every confrontation; it is about deciding in advance who you will be when pressure arrives.

Sports Analogy: - Elite athletes do not make their character decisions mid-competition. They make them in practice, in the offseason, in private, so that when the game gets hard, the response is already formed.

- Pre-deciding your response to trash talk, unfair calls, fear of failure, or craving approval is the spiritual equivalent of film study: you prepare so the moment does not catch you off guard.

Leader Applications: - Do the pre-decision exercise: Have athletes write down their hardest opposition and then write a single sentence that defines their response. Read it before competition.

- Tie it back to G: A grounded athlete (good soil) is the one who can overcome opposition: because roots hold when pressure comes. G makes O possible.

Conclusion: Matthew 13:18-30 does not promise a clean field or easy soil. It promises that resistance will come in three forms (snatched, scorched, and choked) and that you will also have to compete in a mixed world where not everyone shares your values. The call is not to be surprised, not to retaliate, and not to become a weed-puller. The call is to be so deeply Grounded in the Word that when opposition comes, you stay faithful, play clean, and endure. Pre-decide: whatever form opposition takes today, your response will be respect, self-control, and truth, even when it costs.

VAY Sports Fest 2026 - "G.O.A.L." - 05/09/26

"He indeed bears fruit and yields, some a hundred times, some sixty, and some thirty" (Mt. 13:23b)

Matthew 13:31-33 (ESV) - "A: Agent Of Change"

³¹He put another parable before them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his field. ³²It is the smallest of all seeds, but when it has grown it is larger than all the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches."

³³He told them another parable. "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven that a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, till it was all leavened."

Bible Study Discussion:

1. In verses 31-32, what is surprising about the mustard seed? What starts small, and what does it become?
2. Why do you think Jesus compares the Kingdom of heaven to something small, ordinary, and easily overlooked?
3. In sports, what are some small habits that eventually shape a whole athlete, team, or season?
4. Verse 32 says the mustard seed becomes large enough for birds to make nests in its branches. What does that picture suggest about influence, shelter, and blessing for others?
5. In verse 33, how does leaven work? Does it change the dough loudly or quietly? Quickly or gradually? From the outside or from within?
6. What kind of "leaven" can one person bring into a team, family, youth group, or church: complaining, ego, gossip, courage, encouragement, honesty, peace, prayer?
7. What is one environment where you tend to just adapt instead of influence: your team, school, workplace, family, friend group, or church?
8. What is one leaven-like habit you can practice this week in sports and in life: build up a teammate, honor refs, include the outsider, apologize quickly, refuse gossip, encourage effort, pray before reacting?

Title: "A for Agent of Change: 3rd step in the G.O.A.L."

Text: Matthew 13:31-33

Big Idea: *An Agent of Change trusts that God's Kingdom often starts small and works quietly, so we take responsibility for our words, effort, attitude, and presence, believing that small faithful actions can reshape the whole environment.*

I. The Kingdom often starts small, but it should never be despised (vv. 31-32)

Text Summary: - Jesus compares the Kingdom of heaven to a mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his field.

- The point is that the seed is small, but it carries life and future growth inside it, when planted.
- What begins small becomes large enough to bless others. The Kingdom grows from hidden into visible shelter.

Sports Analogy: - Many athletes want the big moment: winning shot, championship game, and public recognition.

- But growth begins small: show up on time, listen to coach, finish the drill, encourage a teammate, humble, etc.
- Team culture does not change all at once. It starts we decide to carry a different spirit into the room.

Leader Applications:

- Don't despise small beginnings: Help athletes notice small faithful steps instead of only big public outcomes.
- Celebrate seed moments: Point out moments when someone shows courage, humility, honesty, or encouragement, even if nobody else notices.
- Teach athletes that small does not mean insignificant. Small actions with Kingdom life inside them can grow into something that blesses many people.

II. The Kingdom works quietly from within until it affects the whole batch (v. 33)

Text Summary: - Jesus also compares the Kingdom to leaven hidden in 60 lbs. of flour.

- Leaven does not work by force from the outside. It works quietly and steadily from within.
- Once it is in the dough, it spreads its influence until the whole batch is affected.

Sports Analogy: - Every athlete brings something into the team culture. One person can spread complaining, ego, laziness, and negativity.

- But one Christian can also spread courage, encouragement, honesty, peace, and joy.
- Agents of Change do not wait for the coach, captain, pastor, or leader to fix everything. They take responsibility for what they can control: their words, effort, attitude, and presence.

Leader Applications:

- Identify the current culture: Ask athletes what is spreading through their team right now. Is it fear, pride, comparison, gossip, courage, humility, or trust?
- Choose a leaven-like habit: Help athlete pick a repeated practice that can quietly influence the whole team.
- Reinforce consistency: Leaven works because it keeps working. Kingdom influence often grows through small faithful actions repeated over time.

III. Agents of Change influence the environment without becoming proud, loud, or controlling (vv. 31-33)

Text Summary: - In both parables, the Kingdom grows through life, not domination.

- The mustard seed grows since God placed life inside. The leaven spreads since it has been *mixed* in the dough.
- Jesus is teaching us a different kind of influence: low, slow, hidden, but real.

Sports Analogy: - Some people try to change a team by being louder, bossier, or more critical.

- But Kingdom influence is different. It does not need to posture, control, or draw attention to itself.
- An Agent of Change can be quiet but strong, humble but courageous, small but steady. He influences the environment by being the same person under pressure: truthful, self-controlled, encouraging, and faithful.

Leader Applications:

- Teach influence without ego: Help athletes see that being an Agent of Change is not about being the hero. It is about being faithful.
- Connect **A** back to **G** and **O**: A grounded athlete who overcomes opposition can now become an Agent of Change for others.
- Give a practical assignment: Before the next practice, game, or workout, have each athlete choose one specific action that will bring Kingdom influence into the environment.

Conclusion: Matthew 13:31-33 teaches us that the Kingdom does not always arrive in the way people expect. It starts like a mustard seed and works like leaven. It may look small, hidden, and slow, but it carries the life and power of God. That means we do not have to wait until we are famous, talented, older, louder, or in charge before we make a difference. If we are Grounded in the Word and learning to Overcome Opposition with integrity, we can now become Agents of Change. One word of encouragement, one act of humility, one honest apology, one refusal to gossip, one moment of courage, repeated faithfully, can begin to reshape the whole room. Small actions, repeated with Kingdom life, can become a shelter for others and a sign that God's Kingdom is already at work among us.

VAY Sports Fest 2026 – “G.O.A.L.” - 06/13/2026

"He indeed bears fruit and yields, some a hundred times, some sixty, and some thirty" (Mt. 13:23b)

Matthew 13:44-50 (ESV) – L: LASTING WIN

⁴⁴“The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. ⁴⁵Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, ⁴⁶who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it. ⁴⁷Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and gathered fish of every kind. ⁴⁸When it was full, men drew it ashore and sat down and sorted the good into containers but threw away the bad. ⁴⁹So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous ⁵⁰and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

Bible Study Discussion:

1. In verses 44-46, what do the man in the field and the merchant both discover? What do they both do after they discover it?
2. Jesus says the man sells all that he has "in his joy" (v. 44). What does this teach us about sacrifice in the Kingdom? Is following Jesus mainly about losing something, or gaining something greater?
3. In sports and life, what do people often treat as their "treasure" or "pearl"? Status, stats, reputation, attention, comfort, approval, winning, money, relationships, or something else?
4. What is one lesser treasure that can quietly control you? How can a good thing become too important when it becomes your ultimate thing?
5. The parable of the net says there will be a real sorting at "the end of the age" (vv. 47-50). How does the reality of the final judgment change the way we define winning now?
6. In sports, trophies fade, records get broken, and applause disappears. What kind of character, witness, and faithfulness actually lasts?
7. A lasting win is becoming the kind of servant our King can trust: humble in win, steady in loss, clean under pressure, and loving enemies. Which of those four is hardest for you right now, and why?
8. What is one thing you need to "sell" or surrender so your life points to Jesus as the greater treasure and the true finish line? Ego, shortcuts, bitterness, comparison, approval, comfort, or something else?

Title: "L for Lasting Win: 4th step in the G.O.A.L."

Text: Matthew 13:44-50

Big Idea: *A lasting win means we define success by what lasts: seeing Jesus and His Kingdom as the greatest treasure, gladly surrendering lesser treasures, and living now in light of the true finish line.*

I. The Kingdom is the treasure worth everything (vv. 44-46)

Text Summary: - Jesus gives two short parables about discovering something of surpassing value: treasure hidden in a field and a pearl of great value.

- In both parables, the person recognizes the value of what he has found and sells everything to gain it.
- The sacrifice is real, but it's not misery. "In his joy" he sells everything to gain the greater treasure.
- The Kingdom does not become precious because we sacrifice for it. We sacrifice because we finally see that the Kingdom is precious.

Sports Analogy: - Athletes already understand sacrifice. They give up sleep, comfort, junk food, free time, and sometimes popularity because they believe the goal is worth it.

- But sports can also train us to chase the wrong treasure: attention, rankings, and personal glory.
- Jesus does not just ask, "Are you willing to sacrifice?" but, "What treasure are you sacrificing for?"
- A lasting win begins when Jesus becomes more valuable than the scoreboard, and the spotlight.

Leader Applications: - Help athletes name their treasure: Ask, "What result would make you feel like this season was worth it?" Then ask, "What would still matter if that result did not happen?"

- Reframe sacrifice as joy: Do not only teach athletes what they must give up. Help them see what they gain in Christ: identity, freedom, forgiveness, purpose, endurance, and eternal life.

II. Lesser treasures must be surrendered before they become masters (vv. 44-46)

Text Summary: - In both parables, the man and the merchant do not merely admire the treasure. They act. They sell what they have in order to gain what is greater.

- Selling everything does not mean the other things had no value. It means they were not ultimate.
- The danger is not always loving bad things. Sometimes the danger is loving good things as a god.
- A lesser treasure becomes a master when we cannot obey Jesus unless we keep it.

Sports Analogy: - Winning is good. Excellence is good. Training hard is good. Team loyalty is good. But any good thing can become too heavy when it becomes our identity.

- If winning becomes ultimate, we may cheat, blame, rage, or crush others to get it.
- If approval becomes ultimate, we may perform for people instead of serving before God.
- If comfort becomes ultimate, we may avoid discipline, honesty, repentance, or courageous obedience.
- Lasting Win means we learn to "sell" the lesser treasures: ego, shortcuts, bitterness, comparison, etc.

Leader Applications: - Use the "lesser treasure" exercise: Have each athlete complete the sentence, "I know _____ has become too important when I am willing to _____ in order to keep it."

- Teach surrender concretely: Help athletes pick one application this week: stop blaming refs, apologize to a teammate, refuse gossip, train with humility, honor the opponent, or be faithful.

III. The true finish line is the end of the age (vv. 47-50)

Text Summary: - Jesus moves from treasure and pearl to a net that gathers & sorts fish of every kind.

- Jesus says there is a sorting at the end of the age, when the evil and the righteous will be separated.
- This is serious and sobering. The Kingdom is not merely a better lifestyle. It is the reality by which every life will finally be measured.
- If the final sorting is real, then the greatest loss is not losing a game. The greatest loss is gaining the world but missing the Kingdom.

Sports Analogy: - Every game has a clock. Every season has a final whistle. Every athlete eventually plays their last game.

- Trophies fade. Records get broken. Bodies age. Applause disappears. But who we become remains.
- Sports can teach us to live toward a finish line, but Jesus teaches us which finish line is true.
- A lasting win is becoming the kind of servant our King can trust: humble in win, steady in loss, clean under pressure, and loving toward opponents.

Leader Applications: - Keep eternity in view without using fear manipulation: Let the seriousness of judgment awaken clarity, not panic. Jesus warns us because He is merciful.

- Define the true scoreboard: Ask athletes, "If Jesus evaluated your practice, your attitude, your words, and your treatment of others today, what would He call a win?"
- Connect L back to G.O.A.: Grounded athletes receive the Word, Overcome Opposition with integrity, become Agents of Change in their environment, and pursue the Lasting Win that points to Jesus and eternity.

Conclusion: Matthew 13:44-50 shows us that the Kingdom is not a side interest. It is the treasure worth everything, the pearl of greatest value, and the reality that will remain when the final sorting comes. That means success cannot be defined only by trophies, stats, attention, or winning the next game. Those things may matter for a moment, but they cannot carry eternity.

Lasting Win means we gladly trade lesser treasures for the greater treasure of Jesus and His Kingdom. We do not surrender because Jesus is trying to make our lives smaller. We surrender because He is giving us something better. In sports and life, trophies fade, records get broken, and applause disappears. But faithfulness remains. Character remains. Love remains. The witness of a life surrendered to Christ remains.

So ask yourself: What have I been treating as my treasure? What do I need to sell? Ego, shortcuts, bitterness, comparison, fear, approval, comfort, or the need to be noticed? A lasting win is not just winning the game. A lasting win is becoming the kind of servant our King can trust: humble in win, steady in loss, clean under pressure, and loving toward opponents. Live for the greater treasure. Play toward the true finish line. That is the Lasting Win.