

Joke: A football coach walked into the changing room before a game. He looked over to his new signing and said, "I'm not supposed to let you play since you failed arithmetic, but we need you to be in the team. So, what I have to do is ask you a math question, and if you get it right then you will be allowed to play."

The player agreed, so coach looked into his eyes intently and asked, "Okay, now concentrate hard and tell me the answer to this. What's two plus two?"

The player thought for a moment and then answered, "4?"

"Did you say 4?" the coach exclaimed, excited that the player had actually got the right answer.

Suddenly all the other players on the team began shouting..., 'Come on coach, give him another chance!'

Every year when the American sporting event called the Super Bowl approaches, it seems to me that people always ask the same questions:

- "Who's playing?"

- “When is it?”
- “Who’s having a party? In case you didn’t know or forgot. We are starting around 5
- “Who is the musical act during the half time show?”
- “What time does it start?”

These questions are easy to answer. You can Google them, and find the answers.

But since your here I will just tell you. You have the Patriots and the Rams tonight at 6:30 on CBS. Maroon 5 to play during half time.

People will pay thousands to go watch the big game. As a matter of fact tickets last night on stub hub we’re going from \$2500 to \$7500 a seat.

Atlanta spent tons to host the big game. As a matter of fact they spent 23 million dollars on a pedestrian bridge to allow people from the transit system to cross a four lane road safely to get to the Mercedes Benz stadium. Isn’t that great that they are trying to make the flow of traffic smooth? Well there’s a problem that 23 million dollars bridge was

shut down and not usable because it posed a security threat.

I digress. Let me get back to trying to get to the message I have for today.

Here is another question that needs to be asked to set up my message this morning. How long is the Super Bowl?

That's a great question church. Want the short answer or the long answer? Long? Good because that is what I had planned on giving.

The game itself is 4 quarters of 15 minutes each. So the game is an hour long right? No actually, in 2010 Super Bowl XLIV (thats 44 for those who are trying to calculate in your head) was 3 hours and 42 minutes. In 2011 3 hours 53 minutes. 2012 3 hours 23 minutes. 2013 4 hours 15 minutes. 2014 3 hours 25 minutes. 2015 3 hours 37 minutes 2016 3 hours 53 minutes ok you get the picture. On average the Super Bowl game lasts 3 hours and 44 minutes.

Out of that 3 hours and 44 minutes how much of that time is actually used playing the game? . . . ready for the answer . . .about 12 minutes.

However, still today about 112 million people will join in unity to watch Tom Brady and Jared Goff throw a ball up and down a field to see who will be crowned the champions.

We have about 325.7 million people in America as of 2017 so around 1 in 3 will be watching the game.

Hopefully not all my my house.

Oh, one more shocking statistic the 30 second commercial which is why most of you all watch the game anyway will be \$168,333. . .per second that's just over 5 million for the 30 second spot.

Now let me just have a few more statistics then I promise I will try to bring this message to something that we can gleam and hopefully be challenged by:

Someone once timed the second quarter of a game to see how it all played out. Here is what he found. . .

2:41 - Pass Plays

2:05 - Penalty mark-offs

1:01 - Running Plays

0:44 - Kickoffs, punts and returns

0:15 - Field Goal and Extra Point attempts

So...out of a possible 15:00 minutes in that quarter...only 6:46 was actually spent playing football. And that's if you include the penalty mark-offs as play time.

That's about 45% of the quarter was spent playing football.

So...how was the remaining 55%... or 8:13 seconds used?

Much of it was players in a huddle.

There was however, another 23:35 spent while the clock was stopped.

There were time outs for measurements.

Time outs for incomplete passes.

Time outs when a player ran out of bounds.

Time outs for TV commercials.

During those time outs guess what the players were doing!

Standing around. . .in a huddle.

So...out of the 38:35 it took to play the 2nd Quarter. . .Only 6:46...or 17% of the time was spent playing football.

So tonight we will sit around and watch the Patriots and Rams play. . .no, huddle that's why people spend thousands on a ticket to go and see their team huddle up. Right?

Ok pastor what does this all have to do with us being here.. . .I didn't come to church to hear a bunch of Super Bowl facts that I could care less about anyway.

Ok before you all walk out on me let me begin to bring this all into perspective for you.

The reason people will watch the Super Bowl. . .is to answer the question:

Which team will better execute after the huddle?

And tonight a large number of people will find the answer to that very question.

But today I need to share with you a much different audience than who will be watching the game, and that is your friends, family, co-workers, the people in your circle of influence, they are watching to see what you will do, how you will act when you get out of your huddle, we call the church.

See church, we come together in unity, we worship together, you receive, hopefully, the play from your quarterback that's the pastor. And then you are sent to line up to see if you can execute what has been called.

And hear this church your friends, relatives, co-workers that don't know the Lord they are no more interested or impressed with the activities of the church, if after the huddle you can't execute what you have been taught.

If you choose not to live and act any different than how they do. If your not offering anything more than what they already have.

If after the huddle your not becoming more like Him. They are no more interested in living for God then they are watching the Patriots and Rams huddle up during the game.

But make no mistake they are watching, their eyes are focused on those who claim to be a follower of Jesus.

And so my question to you this morning is that after you hear the Word of Lord, rather it be from coming to church, reading His Word, a prophetic word, or some great revelation you receive , do you execute?

Let's for a moment. . .look at what we can learn from the teams playing tonight.

First thing we can learn from them is that each team knows the playbook.

When the quarterback gets in the huddle he can tell his teammates what the play is with very few words. (Get in position) He tells them, they line up and he calls the play, white sand, greasy fingers, hut hut. And the team knows what to do.

Not sure why hut, hut is but you get the picture.

Why does that work? Because the team knows the playbook.

David said, Psalm 119:11 (NIV): 11 I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.

Truth is the teams playing today have spent hours studying, and memorizing the playbook. So that when the play is called they know where to line up, where to run, who the ball is going to. They understand the play.

That is why it is so important for the Body of Christ to study and memorize the Scripture, because I can assure you our opposing team knows how to twist the Word of God to deceive the people of God and he will try every time when he has the opportunity to do so.

When the quarterbacks makes that call, not one teammate is caught off guard, because they know the play.

The quarterback will never go with the player no matter how fast they may be if they have not studied the playbook.

And church we have a playbook it's called the Scripture.

And we can learn from its contents.

As a matter of fact look what we are told. . .

Romans 15:4 (NIV): 4 For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope.

And I'm concerned that far too many believers struggle in their walk with God, not because God is not speaking to them, but because they have not hid His Word in their heart.

Those teams probably know their playbook better than many believers know theirs.

The teams tonight will spend a great deal of time in a huddle, just to be sure everyone is on the same page.

But what about the church. I'm not talking just about this body of believers only, but the church as a whole.

We spend time in a huddle every Sunday, trying to receive the plays that the Lord has for us, but what do we do with the call after it's received?

The second point is this, both teams are in tune with their coach.

They understand what the coach wants them to do. Why? Because he told them what to do. They watched tape from other games, watching the other teams.

We too have a coach. He understands us, calls us to a task that He knows if we will trust in Him we can accomplish.

Ephesians 1:15–23 (NIV): 15 For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God's people, 16 I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. 17 I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. 18 I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious

inheritance in his holy people, 19 and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength 20 he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, 21 far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. 22 And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, 23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

Jesus is our coach. He may have called me to be the pastor, the quarterback if you will, but I need to understand the coaches will for this body so that I can equip each of you for the work of ministry.

I take this calling seriously. I do a dis-service to each of you if I don't spend time talking with the coach.

That is why God has the 5 fold ministry of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers.

Look at it. . .

Ephesians 4:11–13 (NIV): 11 So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers,

To do what? 12 to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up

Until when? 13 until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

When the team gets in the huddle everyone just stops what they were doing and listens for the play.

Church there are times when we just simply need to sit in the presence of God and listen. So that we know exactly what it is He has called us to do.

The next point, both these teams will show up tonight conditioned to play. No matter the weather, the circumstances, the situation, they will be there to play.

In between games, they practice their skill, lift weights, do the teams exercise routine. Even in the off season, they

keep themselves prepared. They are constantly ready to play that game.

Tom Brady and Jared Goff didn't show up at the beginning of the season and throw up their first pass, they had thrown that ball many times before that first practice.

Every player had already been conditioning themselves so that they didn't need to catch up with the rest of the team.

Look again at Ephesians. . .

Ephesians 4:11–13 (NIV): 11 So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, 12 to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up 13 until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

But then it continues. . .

Ephesians 4:14–16 (NIV): 14 Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the

cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. 15 Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. 16 From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

Are you growing? Are you doing your part?

God has given us Spiritual gifts that condition us for battle.

Are you using what God has given you?

The teams not only come knowing the playbook, are not just in tune with the coach, and conditioned to play.

But lastly they come dressed for battle.

And church we are in the Super Bowl as well, but it isn't a game. Our enemy wants to destroy us, wants to see to it that every play is blocked.

Church we need to come prepared for battle.

Ephesians 6:10–17 (NIV): 10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. 11 Put on the full armor of God, so

that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.

12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. 13 Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. 14 Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, 15 and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. 16 In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. 17 Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

We are the victors, because our playbook is the best ever, our coach is out of this world, and He has blessed us with gifts that only He can provide.

When used in tune with the Holy Spirit they are, we are, unstoppable.

In the huddle, we need to learn to cast all our cares on him.

In the huddle we need to learn to trust Him.

In the huddle we need to bring every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.

In the huddle we need to listen to the play, so that we can run it with perfection.

In the huddle we need to lean not on our own understanding, but in all our ways acknowledge Him.

What you do in the huddle helps you to execute the plays.

So church go long, the ball is being passed to you, go and do what Jesus did, live like Jesus lived.

I said this last week, but it bares repeating this week.

You are not trying to become a Child of God, you already are. Your a child of God, becoming like Christ.

Hut, hut.

This is how I fight my battles. It may look like I'm surrounded, but I'm surrounded by you.