

September 10th- Get in the Game!

Packers vs Bears Slide- *Immanuel... Are you ready for some football!!!*

This is the NFL Kickoff weekend & Bears Packers play this afternoon!

- How many of you are rooting for the Monsters of the Midway- The mighty Chicago Bears?
- **How many of you will be wearing a cheesehead as you support the Green & Gold?**

As you're eating chicken wings, nachos & brats this afternoon, as yourself...

- **How good would Jordan Love (Packers QB) be if he had no Offensive line?**
We may find out at 3. But seriously- If there were just 6 people on Offense. No line. No Jon Runyan, Myers or Jenkins. Just WRs, TE & RB.
Jordan Love would get sacked every play!
- **How good would Justin Fields (Bears QB) be if he had no WR's- No Darnell Mooney. No DJ More or Chase Claypool?**
No one to throw the ball to. Couldn't score. Packers could stuff the line every play.
- **How good would each defense be without Linebackers, Safeties, Defensive Backs?** *The Offense would score all day.*
- **When the game is on the line, all eyes are on the kickers.** *What would happen if Santos & Carleson (Bears & Packers Kickers) decided not to suit up & just watch from the sidelines? Each team would have no way to score field goals & extra points.*

In the NFL the players are just looking for their chance to Get in the Game!
They've waited their whole life for a chance to get on the Frozen Tundra or play under the lights at Soldier Field! Today I am just going to take 10 min to look at 2 truths

If a team is going to be successful they need EVERY player to get in the game!
They need to get in the game & play to the best of their ability.

This reminds me of what Paul is teaching the church in Corinth in...

I Corinthians 12:14-21, 27 Yes, the body has many different parts, not just one part. If the foot says, "I am not a part of the body because I am not a hand," that does not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear says, "I am not part of the body because I am not an eye," would that make it any less a part of the body? If the whole body were an eye, how would you hear? Or if your whole body were an ear, how would you smell anything? But our bodies have many parts, and God has put each part just where he wants it. How strange a body would be if it had only one part! Yes, there are many parts, but only one body. The eye can never say to the hand, "I don't need you." The head can't say to the feet, "I don't need you..." All of you together are Christ's body, and each of you is a part of it.

The Bears & Packers can't function without WR's, QB's, RB's, Offensive Line, Defense & Kickers. We need each of them to get in the game.

The same is true for our bodies. We can't say to the eye, we don't need you. Or the ear we don't need you. Or the foot we don't need you.

The body needs each part if it is going to function properly.

Whenever you have a sprained ankle, ear infection, or a broken arm you wish your whole body was functioning the way God intended it.

The same is true of our church! We need EVERY PART to function properly.
We need each & every one of you to get in the game & do what God intended you to do

- **The adult small groups can't say to the IcKids workers "we don't need you".**
- *IC Youth & Sports can't say to the people who take care of facilities "we don't need you".*
- **MOP's can't say to nursery workers "I don't need you"**
- **The pastors & the worship team can't say to the tech & sound guys "I don't need you".** **Mute me for a moment.** LOL.

We need each & every one of you to get out of the bleachers & into the game!
We need your gifts & abilities. *We need your skills & passions.* **We need your dreams & ideas.** **We need your faithfulness & willingness.**

In the past few years church volunteering has dropped from 40% to 20%.
Just a few years ago about 40% of church attenders would get in the game. Now just 20% do

That means 80% of attenders are content sitting on the sidelines watching, consuming and being entertained.

Not too long ago I sat in the bleachers too. 6 years ago I would drop my son off at Ignite in 4th grade on Wed nights. Then I would sit in the parking lot for 90 minutes scrolling on my phone playing Candy Crush! After a few weeks I thought "this is stupid! I am going to go in and ask Jody if she could use my help."
(Started as security, then a helper, game leader, teacher)

Immanuel... If we really want to Love God, Love People & Make Disciples...
We need to get out of the bleachers and into the game. **Ask yourself:**

- *Where does God want you to get involved this year?*
- **What gifts, abilities & passions do you have that God can use?**
- **Where is there a need that you can help with?**
- *What is the next step you feel God is wanting you to take?*

Speaking of next steps... This season will be a huge next step for the Bears & Packers QB's

- **After 3 years of being Aaron Rogers' backup, Jordan Love is now the starting QB.** *His coaches will run different plays than they did last year when he was a backup. As the year goes on his playbook will grow & he will mature as a player.*
- **Justin Fields is in his 3rd year as a starter for the Bears.** **He can't just run the same plays that he did at Ohio State or his Rookie season.** *His coaches will draw up plays that will help him mature & take him to the next level.*

Truth #2 If a team is going to be successful, each player needs to grow, mature and take the next step.

Over the next 16 weeks we will all be watching to see if Fields & Love grow and mature as QB's. *If they take the next step towards becoming pro bowl QBs.*

I want to challenge each of you to see what you can do to grow, mature and take the next step in your spiritual journey as well.

Every NFL team has a playbook to help you grow & mature in your position.

The more you read the bible, our playbook, the more you will mature in your relationship with God. Throughout the NT, Paul & Peter talk about the importance of maturing in your relationship with Jesus.

1 Peter 2:2-3 Like newborn babies, you must crave pure spiritual milk so that you will grow into a full experience of salvation. Cry out for this nourishment, now that you have had a taste of the Lord's kindness.

2 Peter 3:18 You must grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Today we had 2 people baptized- Delilah & Yamille. I love that they are both at different places in their journey. Delilah has just gotten to Taste & see that the Lord is Good over her past few years in Identity. She has been craving spiritual milk, reading her bible, praying & even taught a lesson at youth group this year.

Yamille has been growing in the grace & knowledge of our Lord for decades now. She has been a part of so many ministries here IcKids, woman's ministries & just got back from Guatemala. And I love that she keeps growing, keeps maturing. She is not satisfied with just spiritual milk. She wants to take the next step.

Hebrews 5:13-14 You need milk, not solid food! Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.

Just like babies, we need to start eating solid food if we are to continue growing in Christ. Once we have been taught the basics of our faith, it is time for us to dig deeper & take our next step. We should want to study God's Word & learn more about who He is and what He has done.

We all need to grow, mature & take the next step!

Like babies transitioning to solid food, we have to develop a taste for it. They say it takes at least 10x of trying a new food before you like it. When it comes to feasting on God's Word, we develop the taste & desire for it through practice.

The more we read & study God's Word the more it changes and transforms us.

While the Bible calls us to come to Christ like little children, we are not to remain as children. We need to take the next step!

The real tragedy in churches is when people attend for years, maybe decades and still haven't grown & matured in their walk with Jesus.

It is way too easy to become casual christians who are content with a little spiritual milk & just sitting on the sidelines.

Whether you are kicking off a new NFL season or a new school year or ministry year at church I want to ask WHAT IS YOUR NEXT STEP?

When I think of that question I think of 1 of my favorite comedies- **What about Bob?**

In this movie Bob suffers from so many phobias that he is living life trapped in fear.

His psychiatrist- Dr Leo Marvin challenges him to take baby steps.

To set small reasonable goals one tiny step at a time. Baby steps.

*Bob puts it into practice... Baby steps across the office. Baby steps out the door. Baby steps down the hall. He says “All I have to do is take one little step at a time & I can do anything.” **Baby steps!***

- **What baby steps is God asking you to take this year?**

Join a small group, worship team, help at IcKids, Help at IcYouth, coach at IcSports, take a class, join a bible study, share your faith, break a habit, go to CR.

- **What do you need to do to get into the game?**

*Don't settle for being the 80% on the sidelines. What gifts, abilities & passions do you have that God can use? *What is the next step God is wanting you to take?**

- **What do you need to do today to grow, mature & take the next Baby step in your journey with Jesus?**

*What do you need to do to taste & see that the Lord is Good? How can you move on from spiritual milk to solid food? *What is your next baby step to help you grow?**

I really believe that God is going to do some amazing, God-sized things in & through our lives & our church this year! What can you do to be a part of it?