

Only with Jesus will you have it all!

In your Bulletin today you're going to find a flyer announcing the 2nd offering of the Dave Ramsey Financial Peace University Training course to our Parish. It will run from late August through late October.

The 1st offering took place back in Spring with some 55 Parishioners attending.

And the feedback was so positive about how people were getting control of their finances ... that our local instructors, Kelly & Carla Doss, offered to lead it again!

I attended all 9 classes myself and ended up with many nuggets of wisdom such as:

"If you're willing to live like no one else ... then one day you'll be able to live and give like no one else."

That's a real gem.

And here's another gem.

*You can do anything you want ...
you just can't do it all.*

Think about that: you can get all kinds of nice stuff ... but you'll never get it all.

Which means you have to be discerning and disciplined about what you go after.

Now with this being a scripture based training ... it was easy to see that this wisdom ... that applies to ... your financial treasure ... also applies to ... your spiritual treasure.

And so, we human beings ... who only have so much time to live ... have to decide which financial treasures and spiritual treasures we're going to go after ... realizing that,

*You can do anything you want ...
you just can't do it all.*

We hear reference to this truth in all 3 of our readings today.

In our First Reading, God tells Elijah to have Elisha succeed him as Prophet.

Well, Elisha was doing just fine plowing with 12 yoke of oxen and then ... along comes another offer ... to go be a Prophet.

He can do either one he wants ... he just can't do them both.

So what does he do?

He uses the wooden plow and wooden yokes of the oxen to create a fire ...
and he boils the flesh of the 12 oxen and gives it to people to eat.

Wow! That's **what you call making a definitive break with the past!**

Elisha was a farmer ...

but, you can't be a farmer if you don't have a plow and yokes and several oxen.

So by burning his equipment and his animals,

he was making a definitive break with his past profession of farming and
freeing himself to take on the newly offered job of being a **Prophet.**

St. Paul speaks about the wise use of freedom in our Second Reading, writing:

*“For freedom Christ set us free, so stand firm
and do not submit again to the yoke of slavery.”*

What is the yoke of slavery? The yoke of slavery is **sin!**

And we have **this image** from our **First Reading of the yoked oxen ...**

that were bound and weighed down and moved along without freedom.

That's **what sin does ...it binds us & weighs us down and takes away our freedom ...**

our freedom to let the light of God shine through us ...

our freedom to enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

Yes, **sin binds us** and enslaves us to the devil, who only wants our destruction.

Whereas, **virtue frees us** to be... **a disciple of Jesus Christ.**

Each day **we get to choose how we will live ... in sin or with virtue.**

And **once we recognize that living a virtuous life will get us to Heaven ...**

we need to pursue it with all discipline and resolve.

Just as attaining financial wealth requires discipline and determination ...

So also, attaining spiritual wealth requires discipline and determination.

Jesus Himself demonstrated this as we heard in our **Gospel** today, **Luke** writes,

*“When the days for Jesus' being taken up were fulfilled,
he resolutely determined to journey to Jerusalem.”*

Jesus knew the challenges that He would experience in **Jerusalem ... where they would crucify Him ... **but He also knew the victory to be secured** ... **redemption.****

And **the victory** was worth it ... **so Jesus** resolutely went forward on His journey.

The **victory of Redemption** that **Jesus won**, can be ours if we resolutely follow Him.

This is **the message** I've been sharing with you over **the past 12 years.**

And based on your presence at Holy Mass ... I believe you get the message!

Do you realize that over **the past 12 years** we've prayed:

684 Sunday Masses at St. Henry

1,308 Sunday Masses at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton

3,000 Daily Masses at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton

That's **4,992 Masses** **prayed with you and for you!**

Yes, it adds up ... that's **5,000 times** that we worshipped the Father as He desired ...
in **Spirit** and in **Truth** ... in **the Holy Spirit** and in **Jesus** who is **Truth.**

This explains the many graces that we have in our parishes ... they're **the fruit** of
you faithfully offering your thanks and your petitions and your very selves ...
to **the Father** in union with His Divine Son Jesus in **the Mystery of the Mass** ...
and then partaking of the power & presence of Jesus in **Holy Communion.**

And **there's more** ... over the past 12 years we've:

Baptized **210** Babies

Married **85** Couples

Buried **143** Parishioners

Welcomed **200** people into the Catholic Church through RCIA

And, through **our daily prayers & courageous invitations**, you & I have inspired
many people to come back into full communion with the Catholic Church, and
many people to deepen their relationship with Jesus.

That's **the ultimate goal** you know ... coming to know God and His Son, Jesus.

This is **the very prayer** Jesus prays to His Father before He suffers and dies, saying:
*"This is eternal life ... that they know you, the only true God,
and Jesus Christ whom you have sent."* (Jn. 17:3)

I believe many of you have done that ...

I believe **many of you** have moved from ... **knowing about God** ...

to actually knowing God and His Son, Jesus.

So you see ... we've done a lot together ... **but we didn't do it all.**

Yes, together we've enhanced and maintained our parish campuses ... completing many **renovations and **additions** that have provided us with the **beauty** and **function** needed to gather as a people ... **to love God and one another.****

But there were also projects that we didn't get to

- like refurbishing the interior of this church
- and building a bigger Parish Hall
- and building a Grade School
 - improving our parking lot and installing new parking lot lights
 - beautifying our Sanctuary with **enclosures** for **Joseph and Mary.**

There are **many projects** that we didn't get to ... **but we did the best we could** ... knowing that we could do anything we wanted we just couldn't do it all.

That's where the **Parish Council** and the **Finance Council** come in ... **as they help the Pastor discern where to place our efforts.**

And **then** there were individual family matters that I didn't get to address ... please forgive me for that. Along with my duties as Pastor of 2 Parishes, I've **also had the duties** of **Vicar General** of the Diocese for **the last 8 years.** I did **many things** in both areas ... **but I sure didn't do it all.**

Thank you for letting me into your lives in **good times** and in **bad.** You are a **wonderful Faith Family** and it's been a **joy** and a **privilege** to serve you.

And now, **the journey** will continue ... for **you** and for **me.**

Today, **Jesus** calls us to put our hands to the plow and not look back ...

He calls us to keep going ... to keep proclaiming and seeking the kingdom of God.

Next Friday July 1st, Fr. Johnson will become **your Pastor**, and I will become Pastor to the families at **Holy Spirit parish** and **St. John parish** in Tuscaloosa.

This will all take place with Bishop Baker's blessing.

I know you'll adopt Fr. Johnson as you adopted me. Listen to the wisdom, the insights and the perspective that he will bring from his **unique education** and **life experiences.**

And when the need arises to celebrate Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals ... please entrust yourselves to your new Pastor, Fr. Johnson and Deacon Tim.

Even though I have **deep friendships** with many of you,
I know that my duties at Holy Spirit Church will keep me very busy there ...
and so, **I won't be able** to preside over any events here.

I've already been notified of a funeral at **St. John's** for **next Saturday, July 2nd!**

And **while** I will no longer be here with you in person ...
I will certainly be with you in spirit as I remember you in my prayers.
Please remember me in yours.

So, **for those of you** who brought your new Mass Journals with you to Mass today,
I wonder what you wrote down.

Hopefully you recorded the message.
"You can do anything you want ... you just can't do it all."

And that you'll take that message to prayer and to your home life ...
to help you discern where to spend your time and energy.

And **hopefully** you'll place *"maintaining your relationship with God"*
at the top of your list

It's **the wisest investment** you 'll ever make!

And **actually,** it's **the only way ... you'll ever get ... to have it all.**

Because **if you know Jesus,** then you know the One ... who is all in all!