

Grit and Faith!

Scripture used: Hebrews 11:35-37 (NLT)

OVERVIEW

Big Idea:

On this Superbowl Sunday, Pastor Hurmon told us the real-life story of Philadelphia Eagles wide receiver Torrey Smith (born 1989) who grew up in grinding poverty and, through faith and grit, overcame considerable challenges to become a star NFL player and devoted husband, father, and philanthropist. Torrey was born from a teenage unwed mother, grew up without a father figure, and spent most of his youth taking care of many younger siblings, and trying to shield them from domestic violence. He experienced terrible hardship, pain and trauma. His primary school PE teacher and coach recognized his potential, and sponsored him to attend a summer athletic camp where his extraordinary ability and discipline were revealed. He played football in high school, and then at the University of Maryland, and later with the Baltimore Ravens and San Francisco 49ers. Torrey was driven by a strong sense that "God is good all the time".

KEY POINTS

- 1) **Point #1 Grit and Faith Support Each Other.** Social scientist Angela Duckworth studied grueling competitive attrition-based programs and found a consistent pattern that successful outcomes are not correlated to pre-training, IQ, test scores, physical strength - but by the one attribute of perseverance - a stubborn resolve to stick to it, and never give up. Accepting Jesus in your life will open the door to miraculous and unexpected events, and narrow escapes. Yet the point is not to escape, but to overcome. In Revelation 3:20, Jesus is defined as the one who developed the capacity to overcome. We are all crippled, but with grit we are living our destiny.
- 2) **Point #2 We need to keep a long-term goal in mind.** This is important for both our private life and public life. We need to picture who we are moving toward, as sister/brother, wife/husband, daughter/son, mother/father, employee, volunteer, mentor, etc. We need to stay the course. We are easily bored in today's culture, and we seek feel-good relationships. We should not lose our capacity for grit and our quiet determination. Pastor Hurmon was raised by his elderly great-aunt in rural Coushatta, Louisiana. As she was fighting terminal cancer, she would not rest until she heard "Well done, good and faithful servant" from the Lord. She perceived daily acts to be connected to an eternal purpose. She kept caring for, teaching, and disciplining Young Hurmon.
- 3) **Point #3 We ought to refuse quitting even in the face of pain and great obstacles.** Pastor Hurmon illustrated this with another football legend. Steve Young was officially on the Brigham Young University football team but was relegated to the "hamburger squad": a unit composed of the least valuable players whose only role was to run plays so the Brigham Young defensive line could practice. After a while, Steve Young called his dad and announced his firm intent to quit and come home. Steve's dad replied: "You can quit, but you can't come home." Steve found it in himself to turn things around, throwing over 10,000 passes in one summer. He improved himself enough to be #2 his sophomore year, and then start as a junior. And even after that, grit was still required. Steve Young had to wait four more years as second string to Joe Montana before truly beginning his own legendary career. Jesus himself modeled the ultimate resolve and endurance. And he has the grit to never give up on us!

DISCUSSION

- 1) **HEAR** - Most of us have goals in life. But Pastor Hurmon challenged us have goals that will make God smile. Do your goals stand up to this test?
- 2) **UNDERSTAND** - Jesus asked His followers to be "overcomers", not "escapers". What does this mean in your life and in your walk with God? What are you trying to escape that you instead need to overcome?
- 3) **DO** - Pastor Hurmon ended his sermon with the statement "God, add grit to my faith, and faith to my grit!" Identify one area of your life where grit can make the difference. Ask God for the faith to persevere and overcome!