

Do It Anyway

3-20-11

Good Morning, and good morning to all the Upward kids and relatives. We are especially glad you are here with us today. Let me tell you,

Today we celebrate with you, these amazing basketball players and cheerleaders along with all the other children that are with us today whether you played Upward or not.

- I saw kids fall down or get bloody noses this season and start crying but they got back in the game anyway.
- I saw parents walk into this building on practice evenings some who were simply exhausted from a long days work and coach or be here with their kids anyway.

The dedication I saw got me to thinking about all those NBA players that are playing right now, who against all odds did it anyway. Players like Kobe Bryant, Shaquille O'Neal, LeBron James, then it got me to thinking about one other player...[\(See if you can remember this guy – Slam Dunk video\)](#)

Michael Jordan when he finished the game of Basketball was arguably one of the greatest players of all-time. His honors include him being:

- Six-time NBA champion (1991-93, 1996-98);
- 5 time - MVP (1988, '91, '92, '96, '98);
- 10-time All-NBA First Team (1987-93, 1996-98);
- Defensive Player of the Year (1988);
- Nine-time All-Defensive First Team (1988-93, 1996-98);
- Rookie of the Year (1985);
- 14-time All-Star;
- 3- time All-Star MVP (1988, '96, '98);
- One of 50 Greatest Players in NBA History ('96);
- Olympic gold medalist (1984, '92).

This guy was simply the standard of basketball excellence. But it was not always that way. After all this, we tend to forget that Michael Jordan was a kid once, he did not have all the honors or trophies, he was just a kid, who did not know what the future was going to hold for him.

He was cut from his High School basketball team but he decided to try again the next year anyway. Can you believe what the world would have missed had he given up. In fact listen to him talk about another year when he was 5 years old. [\(Video- shooting in gym\)](#)

At 5 years old he knew something and he kept at it anyway, in spite of setbacks and disappointments until in 9th grade he saw it come about.

In 9 th grade I got my first chance to start on the JV basketball team. I remember it because it was the first game my brother had ever gotten a chance to see me play. He had

been overseas in the Vietnam war and now he was back and he was watching me his little brother start in my first game. The game was tied going into the fourth quarter, and as that quarter progressed it was obvious that it was going to come right down to the wire. With 7 seconds left on the clock we shot and made it to put us up by one. We were going to win and it was the first game my brother ever got to see me play. We were really good at defense so we were going to full court press and they were not even going to get close to the basket. They threw the ball in to their player at our foul line, he dribbled, once (6 seconds) then he picked it up and threw it to one of their players at half court (5, 4 seconds) That was the player I was guarding, that player caught it, at half court, dribbled once (3 2 seconds) turned at half court I jumped to block it, my hand went to his right side and he shot from his left, he launched it, over my outstretched arms, before I could adjust, as the buzzer went off, and everything went into slow motion. As I came back to the ground I turned just in time to see the ball go straight through the hoop. We had lost and I was crushed. For days I played it over and over in my mind. I knew he was a lefty, I should never had tried to block him from the right...and on and on I beat myself up.

What does it mean to do it anyway?

What does it mean that when life does not go your way, you get back up anyway

In the bible, there is a book called Hebrews and in it, it says *“Let us run with endurance the race God has set before us . We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus...he was willing to die a shameful death on the cross because of the joy he knew would be his afterward. Now he is seated in the place of highest honor beside God’s throne in heaven.”*

In other words, the bible is saying, Jesus hung on the cross anyway.

- When Michael Jordan got cut from his HS team he came back anyway
- Jesus, even though he knew you would not consider him an option died for you anyway.

Like Michael Jordan who at 5 years old knew something and he kept pursuing it, Maybe it is time to admit, you know something. That God is for you, even though you do feel a little like life has hit one at the buzzer on you and you have lost the game.

The truth is Jesus is really is like this eternal cheerleader who keeps rooting for you and me, he is someone who keeps saying “I believe in you.” Even when you don’t believe in me”.

Those of us who are here this morning, maybe it is time to reconnect with God anyway. Pray with me.