

Volleyball tournament—Play for God's glory (8/1/09)

The apostle Paul encouraged the believers that we are to run our race as to win the prize (1Cor 9:24). Therefore, as we enter into the competition of our volleyball tournament, I am of the firm opinion that we ought to do our very best. In fact, because our God always does things perfectly, we therefore ought to do our best to be perfect in all that we do. So, whether you are playing, officiating, organizing or cheering for your team, do your best, for it reflects the perfectness of our God.

Equally important in doing your best, it is to understand that we do our best, not for our own glory, nor for our church's glory, but for God's glory (1Cor 10:31). As perfectly we desire to reflect our God's perfection with our athletic display, it is utterly important to desire to reflect our God with our inner selves, displayed through our attitudes. Winning cannot replace the attitude we can display of God's glory. In other words, more important than who wins is how we win. Did you know, whether we win or lose, if God receives the glory, then God wins? However, whether in a loss or a win, if God's glory is hidden, then we have lost the most important aspect of being a Christian, and that is, whether we cheer or play, we do all things for God's glory.

So, both in action and in heart, displayed with our attitude, let us reflect the beauty of our God, so that our God will receive all the glory through this volleyball tournament.

Volleyball tournament—To become a loser (8/1/09)

On August 15th, 1945, God heard the cries for deliverance for a small nation that was suffering cruelly at the hands of her oppressors. Though forgotten and ignored for many years by the leaders of this world, God moved the American army to march against the Japanese to repossess our motherland. To hear the brutality and cruelty of our fathers and mothers who suffered for over 35 years, is heart-wrenching.

More cruel and longer than our oppression, Israel was in bondage for 430 years, to the Egyptians. And as God's people cried out to their God, "God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob" (Ex 2:24). God is mindful of the suffering of His people. He cares, and He delivers.

Longer and more painful than any oppression in the world, is the bondage of sin that people are born into. The Japanese, the Egyptians, the Romans, or even the devil, they are not our greatest enemy when it comes to our spiritual battle. Sin is the true enemy. It is because of sin that all sinners would descend into hell. And if our sins are cleansed within us, then we would all enter into God's everlasting kingdom. In other words, sin is what bars us from entering into God's kingdom. Sin is the worst cruelty and evil our lives can ever know. In fact, we are helpless and hopelessly lost in our battle against sin. We lose.

Christ Jesus came into this world, not to gather up the winners, but to seek and save the losers. Rather than be celebrated with the successful winners of this world, Jesus instead sought to dwell with the losers. Starting with His birth, He rejected the king's palace, but embraced a manger, so that the lowly shepherds can come and revere Him. Throughout His life, He always sought the company of rejects, such as sinners, prostitutes and tax collectors. Fittingly, at the end of His earthly journey, He was accompanied by two losers, criminals, whom He delighted to take one of them to His home.

Dear brothers and sisters, as we will compete hard and long during this volleyball tournament, how would you define a winner and a loser? Would you use this world's standard and "just win, baby" whatever it takes? Or would you fix your eyes on Jesus, and delight to use your life to dwell with those who are down, who are hurting, who need our uplifting, just as Christ lifted us up? It is my prayer that you can lose like Christ, so that you will truly win like Him.