

So Close . . . But, Yet So Far

Today we come to the exciting end to another year of Braves baseball. It still seems a little strange saying that since it was not too long ago that October was just another month of baseball for Atlanta fans. A quick sprint to the end gave somewhat of a "twinkle" of hope until last Thursday night's loss against the Phillies. Looking at the win/loss breakdown, it is easy to think about what could have been had they won just a few more games. They were so close . . . and yet so far!

Life can be much like a close ball game. You know, like those basketball games that are won or lost in the last few seconds, or those college football games that are won or lost . . . in overtime! Life has the potential of being a chase to the finish.

How often are the occasions when we consider what could have been? We know the stories of the up and coming athlete, who has the potential of playing in the pros someday, yet allows himself to get entangled with the wrong kind of people. Dabbling a little in the world here and a little there appears to have little possibility of long-term damage, yet "dabbling" has the ability to make what could be into what would have been very quickly. Just ask Michael Vick! How many shattered dreams are experienced because of mediocre commitment?

Some people live the Christian life like this. Some live the Christian life like it is a baseball season, where you have 162 games to play. You win a few here and you lose a few there, hoping that at the end of the season of your life that you have an above .500 record; that is you win more than you lost. In other words you hope you have lived just good enough to hear the Lord say, "Well, done good and faithful servant."

But is the Christian life to be a life of inches? Is it about just living to the end of your life hoping that you have at least won more battles than you lost to Satan? NO!!! There is nothing mediocre about the Christian life. It is not about doing just enough good to get a reward. It is not about finishing the season in September! It is not about just barely getting across the goal line in the last seconds of the game of life.

The Christian life is an overwhelming victory that God provides for you in Christ. When you are forgiven, you are not just barely winning, you are a dominating force against Satan. Victory in Christ is not just barely winning, it is a landslide! Just realizing the blessings found in Christ produces a determination in each forgiven person to excel to the utmost. Christian living should never be about settling with at least winning more than you lost. It is being happy by winning always, even when you feel like you are losing! Paul said, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, and yet not I but Christ lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me," Galatians 2:20. In Christ even our personal failures can become His victories if we trust in Him.

Why do Christians struggle to be faithful? Why is it so easy to miss worship assemblies, or Bible classes? How do we get so busy to forget to pray or

study God's word? The Christian life is not about just getting by! It is about victory in Christ, every time! The apostle Paul talked about being the athlete that wins by following the rules, 2 Timothy 2:5. God wants you to win the race of life with an overwhelming victory, not just barely crossing the finish line. See what Paul wrote in 2 Timothy 4:7,8.

Almost a great season is something the fans can get over because there is always next year. But in life we only have one shot. Never be satisfied with what is almost a great marriage, or being almost a great friend, or having almost a great career, or being almost a great student, or especially almost a great Christian. Refuse now to get to the end of your life and think about what could have been?

Do not enter eternity knowing you were "so close . . ."
—Scott