



# Links Players

## FAST FORWARD 8: THE WORLD WE LIVE IN

*“... at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne...”  
(Matthew 19:28, NIV)*

I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT IS LIKE WHERE YOU LIVE, but courses near me keep closing. Oh, this isn't a 2020 thing. It has been happening for a while. Now I think that if some of these course operators had known what a boom 2020 was going to bring to the game, they may have stayed open and tried to recover.

Courses can close for several reasons, but the most common is financial. That's no surprise, and neither is this: On the slow, steady slip toward closure, those courses cut corners and the conditions show it. Grass creeps into the bunkers and the sand is depleted. The greens, even when cut, look ragged, with bare patches or furrows. The trees need pruning, and the turf in their shade is thin and desperate.

One of the lost courses in our area did its best to combat the obvious. Its marketing copy pronounced: “Our course offers terrific views and challenging play for golfers at every skill level. Well-groomed fairways and greens keep the course difficult yet friendly.” But when the comments at a popular online review site begin with “WORST COURSE I HAVE EVER SEEN!!!,” you're not fooling anyone.

In so many ways, this picture of a failing golf course is a metaphor for the world at large. Our only mistake is in thinking this is something new. The poet William Butler Yeats penned his contributions to the literary arena in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Yeats held no Christian view of the world, but all those decades ago he saw clearly in his poem “Second Coming”: “Things fall apart; the center cannot hold” and “The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere/The ceremony of innocence is drowned.”

Yeats, for all those dark words, was no more insightful than Jesus, who knew full well what was in the heart of each person (see John 2:24-25). What was there could not be trusted, because what was there was sin.

God's creation, as we have been studying it, was miraculous and beautiful. Even man and woman were perfect—right up until they exercised their option. They said to themselves, “This little variance, this single bite of fruit, what can it mean beyond our family circle?” Quite obviously it meant a lot. On that day, things began to fall apart, and they are still falling. This is why our hope can no longer be in this world, but only in the one who made it. He alone can renew all things.

Written by Jeff Hopper ©2021 Links Players International. A video introduction for this study may be found here: [https://youtu.be/7u\\_QYq7Xivc](https://youtu.be/7u_QYq7Xivc).

**Opening questions** What is the worst course you can remember playing on in terms of course conditions? What are some of the things that made it so? Is the course still open today?

### READING Psalm 10; Matthew 19:28-30

#### Ancient and present trouble, ancient and present hope (Psalm 10)

Reflect on the first 10 verses of this psalm. What resonates with you in connection to the world as you see it around you today? Do you ever find your spiritual strength sapped by the reality of sin's broad reach?

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Where did the psalmist go on to place his hope? In our day, what are some objects of misplaced hope we might turn to? How can you fight to remember where your hope must rightly rest?

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#### The renewal of all things (Matthew 19)

What promises did Jesus offer in these words? What things are you most desiring to see renewed? How eagerly do you anticipate eternity?

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