



Links Players

Chasing Immortality

...who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, and which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel....(2 Timothy 1:8-12, ESV)

In an earlier monologue regarding the players who qualified to compete at this year's Masters and for the rare privilege of donning the green jacket, one commentator referred to the 2023 pursuit of Master's glory as "chasing immortality."

Last month another golf announcer provided commentary about the recently released list of those men and women who are being inducted into the 2024 Golf Hall of Fame (i.e., Padraig Harrington, Sandra Palmer along with the late Johnny Farrell, Beverly Hanson, Tom Weiskopf, and the 13 LPGA Founders) as those who had achieved "immortality."

When we speak this way, we are saying nothing more than these men and women have accomplished rare feats of various kinds, and consequently, we will remember them for as long as we have history books and archival records. Rightly understood, this is certainly more than appropriate.

To win at Augusta or be honored by the gatekeepers of the Golf Hall of Fame is rarified air, indeed! These men and women, now designated as "immortals," have earned the right to be highly regarded by those of us who are mere "mortals."

Of course, none of us are gullible enough to think that we literally confer "immortality" on these world-class golfers and that somehow they will escape death and live forever. We typically mean that they have moved into a category that requires enormous honor from the rest of us who love this great game, and thus, they are to receive the appropriate tribute.

However, when we probe deeper into the issue of immortality, that is, genuine immortality (as in living forever), we have arrived at a topic that has captured the imaginations of philosophers, theologians, mystics, and common folk alike. And why not? After all, the idea of living forever by conquering death would be an unspeakably great accomplishment.

As it turns out, someone has already done it. Before we get to that story, let's clarify what Scripture means when it refers to immortality. Scripture does not mean what Plato meant. Plato believed, among other erroneous ideas, that all humans have immortal souls and will live forever in a disembodied existence.

Over against this, only three persons have ever possessed genuine immortality, if we mean what Scripture means—a life with no beginning and no end; those three would and could only be the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

And yet, here is the most wonderful news. The eternal Son of God became a man 2000 years ago. Because Jesus, as a man, never sinned, death had no claim on him. And because he never sinned, he would live forever as a human, not merely as the pre-incarnate Son of God. This is to say, “the man [Jesus] was raised from the dead with an immortal body and sits at the right hand of God, and that for all eternity.”

Extraordinarily, he didn't keep this to himself. As a gift from heaven to those who put their trust in Jesus Christ, we will, at Christ's return, see our mortal bodies transformed into immortal ones. Contrary to various misunderstandings, Christians don't merely live with immortal souls in heaven — they live forever with immortal souls and bodies in the new heavens and earth where the curse had been abolished.

On this post-Easter, Monday morning, nothing could rival this news! It goes without saying that Jesus has stipulations to receive immortality: Jesus demands repentance from sin. He also demands our highest allegiance. In light of this promise of immortality awaiting those who repent and believe, why would anyone refuse this gracious offer?

Prayer: Jesus, open our eyes to the wonder of immortality.

—

Dennis Darville

Copyright 2023 Links Players International

The Links Daily Devotional appears Monday-Friday at linksplayers.com.