



Links Players

Suffering - Being Present

Two are better than one because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up! (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10, ESV).

The 2023 Ryder Cup is here! To state the obvious, “A lot is on the line.” As endlessly reported, the USA squad hasn’t won on European soil in three decades.

Chants of “USA, USA, USA” will explode across the fairways of Marco Simone Golf and Country Club over the weekend, only to be dwarfed by shouts from European fans.

For this reason, it’s no secret that the home team has a distinct advantage. It doesn’t guarantee a victory, but the energy coming from the gallery elevates the players’ performance.

No doubt, many on both sides of the pond have vivid memories of Seve Ballesteros, like a matador, raising his patented fist pump, or Jordan Spieth, like Houdini, holing yet another impossible chip, or Rory, like a champion boxer, holding his arms toward the sky.

The emotional “umph” coming from raucous crowds on behalf of these competitors certainly qualifies as the “secret sauce;” another ingredient in the “secret sauce” that should be considered is the chemistry between players.

Looking back through the years, each Ryder Cup had those pairings where one player simply “didn’t have his best stuff.” These players, sadly, not only didn’t have their “A-game,” they had little to no game. Often, however, their partner carried the load.

Watching one player carry the weight of a match for his struggling partner is something to behold. One player “bearing the burden” of his friend against their opponents is not only heart-warming but the stuff of legend.

Very few things are more disheartening than being alone in one’s suffering. Suffering is one thing; suffering alone is another. Since we all suffer in diverse ways, having that trusted friend to walk through the “valley of the shadow” with is immeasurably comforting.

To follow Christ involves manifold blessings, not the least of which is having Jesus as our closest friend (John 15:14). Not only does the follower of Jesus have the unspeakably great benefit of being a friend of the King, but he has the unbreakable promise of the King’s presence in the midst of suffering.

Yet, Christ’s kindness to his own hardly ends there. Among the many other gifts that follow after his friendship, being surrounded by fellow believers with whom we lock arms in the difficult seasons of life ranks somewhere at the top of the list.

If you are in a season of suffering, you will likely not see or hear large crowds urging you onward and upward, but hopefully, you will have that friend who will be present to help carry the weight of your burden.

Even sweeter still, you can experience the presence of Christ together, enveloping you in his comfort and strength.

Prayer: Lord Jesus! Manifest your grace, strength, and presence in the midst of our sufferings.

READING - Ecclesiastes 4: 9-10; John 15:12-14; Galatians 6:2

1. Reminisce and discuss those moments where you carried or were carried by your partner in tournament play or a friendly match.

2. Ecclesiastes 4: 9-10 stresses the importance of going through tough times with a friend. What does he say regarding those who “go it alone?” Discuss.

3. Application: In every club, there are usually those in seasons of difficulty. Take a moment, converse, pray, and discuss how you might stand with your friends.
