



Links Players

Nice Save

For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it. (Mark 8:35 NASB)

As a competitive golfer, my weakness has always been my short game. I was a good ball-striker. I was long off the tee and hit my irons well but did not scramble well. I felt like I told other players, "Nice save." for getting up and down a lot more than I ever received the same compliment.

This was made most obvious in a tournament where I played with a player from Australia whose card I kept in the first round. He was a very pleasant player, but his game didn't impress me.

We exchanged cards after the round, and I handed him his card back with a 4-under 68, thinking, "How did he just beat me by four strokes?" He only hit six greens in regulation, and I hit 13 or 14.

The next day, I paid more attention to his game. I played well, hit 17 greens in regulation, including two Par-5s in two, and shot 68. On the other hand, he hit six greens in regulation, birdied five of those holes, chipped in for a birdie on another, and got up and down 10 out of the other 11 other holes. He shot 67!

Near the end of the round, after another saved par, I said to him, "Man, you get up and down from everywhere." He replied, "Ah, it's easy, Mate!"

I never figured out how some players could make it look so easy around the greens, but I always appreciated saving par when I missed a green.

As for life in Christ, it has been even more difficult for me to learn not to try to save my life. Yes, I said that.

Jesus taught and demonstrated that trying to save our lives was not the way of heaven.

It is not natural. It is counterintuitive. However, it is a foundational teaching of Jesus. "And He summoned the crowd together with His disciples, and said to them, "If anyone wants to come after Me, he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me" (Mark 8:34).

If we take the teachings of Jesus seriously, what does this mean for us? Let me offer a few thoughts:

- There is not enough of you to fill you.

- Being consumed with you will ultimately consume you.
- Those who devote themselves to themselves eventually lose themselves.
- The fullest people we know are the emptiest of themselves.

Maybe we are not enough for us to live for. But the Kingdom of God is.

I encourage those still reading to invite God into your plans and desires. Allow him to transform your mind (Romans 12:2) into his. Don't just settle for "heaven when you die." Pursue Jesus as your teacher; trust him to lead you into fullness and truth.

Prayer – Father, teach me to desire and pursue the teachings of your son, Jesus.

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Josh Nelson

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