



Links Players

Taking A Risk

I have told you these things so that in me you may have peace. In this world, you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world. (John 16:33, NIV)

When you think of a golfer who took a big risk during a major championship, what memory comes to mind? For me, the image is from the final round of the 2010 Masters. Let's set the stage. When the final twosome of Lee Westwood and Phil Mickelson reached the Par five 13th tee, Phil was clinging to a one-stroke lead over Anthony Kim and two over Westwood and K.J. Choi.

Mickelson and Westwood hit their tee shots to the right, landing among the pine trees. Westwood played the safe shot, punching out to leave a short wedge to a front pin tucked behind Rae's Creek.

Mickelson, hitting off pine straw with a small opening between two trees, had 187 yards to safely carry the creek. Caddie Bones Mackay lobbied for the smart play of punching out like Westwood, but Mickelson overruled his caddie and chose to go for the green.

He lashed a shot that navigated the narrow opening and ended up just over the creek and onto the green – and the Augusta fans went crazy! Phil two-putted for birdie, widening his lead on his way to a three-stroke victory for his third green jacket.

Afterward, Mickelson talked about the difference between a great shot and a smart shot: "A great shot is when you pull it off. A smart shot is when you don't have the guts to try it." No wonder he's long been known as "Phil the Thrill."

The Bible is filled with stories about individuals who took risks. Consider some Old Testament examples: Abram traveling 1500 miles to an unknown destination...David facing the giant Philistine warrior Goliath...Daniel was thrown into the lion's den because he continued to pray to God.

There are more, but instead of the well-known heroes, let's focus on someone probably unfamiliar to many. Her name was Joanna, and you won't find much about her in the Bible. In fact, her only reference is in Luke's gospel and just two verses at that. However, what we can infer from reading Luke 8:3 speaks volumes about her faith and the risk she took in following Jesus.

Joanna was the wife of Chuza, who served as the steward for the Tetrarch of Galilee (Mark's gospel uses the term "king" instead of "tetrarch.") You may not be familiar with Joanna or Chuza, but you will likely recognize Chuza's boss – it was Herod Antipas, the ruler that ordered John the Baptist to be beheaded, and who mocked Jesus during his trial.

Even with her husband's close connection to Herod, Joanna supported Jesus financially out of her own means, and she courageously went to his tomb on Easter morning. Despite the risk of openly supporting Herod's enemy, Joanna didn't let her connections to the palace deter her from devoted service to her Lord and Savior.

Let Joanna's example inspire all of us. As followers of Christ, we will encounter trouble in this world. Let us take risks when required to faithfully follow and serve the one who gave his life for us and take heart in knowing that he has indeed overcome the world.

**Prayer: Heavenly Father, we know there will be times we face challenges because we follow you. When life's trials occur, give us comfort, strength, and courage to be faithful to you.
Amen**

—

J. D. Bown

Copyright 2024 Links Players International

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