



Links Players

On Knowing Sean Connery, Doug Sanders, and Jesus

...More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ.... (Philippians 3:8)

In 1997, I was in a golf shop off the 18th fairway at the Old Course at St. Andrews when I heard a voice I immediately recognized. I looked up and saw Sean Connery talking with the cashier.

Sean Connery was my favorite movie star at the time, so I walked over, introduced myself, shook his hand, and enjoyed a brief conversation with him.

Another person I first encountered on the 18th hole at St. Andrews, though it was through television, was Doug Sanders. I don't remember the first time I saw it, but it was the short clip of him missing the 4-foot putt on the 72nd hole of the 1970 Open Championship at St. Andrews.

Most people only know Doug Sanders from that short video clip, but I got to know him much better after Dennis Darville introduced me to him in Houston in 1997. The relationship grew over the next 23 years until Doug's death in 2020.

I played golf with Doug several times, went out to eat with him, helped him with legal issues, and had been in his homes in Houston and Palm Springs. We talked about his near-death experience, his conversion to Christianity, his family, and the 4-foot putt he missed on the 18th hole at St. Andrews. By the end of his life, I knew Doug Sanders pretty well and certainly much better than I ever knew Sean Connery.

Here's where I am going with all this: People can walk the aisle at church or pray the Sinners Prayer at a retreat, and they think that's what it means to know Jesus. They encounter Jesus like I encountered Sean Connery, and maybe they are even born again, but they don't really know Him any better than when they first met Him.

The Apostle Paul first encountered Jesus on the road to Damascus. His relationship with Jesus, though, continued to grow. Paul walked with Jesus through a shipwreck, imprisonment, beatings, and stonings.

Jesus spoke to Paul through prophecy and prayer. By the time Paul wrote his letter to the Philippians and made the declaration cited above, he had known Jesus for about twenty-five years.

The Greek word translated "rubbish" in Philippians 3:8 is "skubala," which can also mean dung, and the Greek word translated "knowing" is "gnosis," which means more than just a surface awareness but a deeper, experiential knowledge.

Paul had given up fame, fortune, friends, and his career to become a Christian, yet by the time he wrote Philippians 3:8, if you took all Paul had given up and set them beside the experience of knowing Jesus on a deep, personal level, those things were like garbage or excrement in comparison.

Some Christians know Jesus like I knew Sean Connery. Others know Jesus like I knew Doug Sanders. We all should want to know Jesus the way Paul knew Him, where even the good things the world has to offer become worse than worthless in comparison.

Prayer: Lord, help me to know you better. Amen.

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