



Links Players

Conversations with PGA Tour Champions

Mark Wilson

...let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. (Hebrews 12:1-2, ESV)

Reaching the Tour is one thing. Winning on the Tour is an entirely different matter. Winning five times might not secure your place in the Hall of Fame, but it implicitly communicates to anyone who cares to notice, “I’ve got serious golf talent.”

Mark Wilson is just such a guy. After being voted the best collegiate golfer in 1996, he won three times on what is now the Korn Ferry Tour. Eventually, he earned the opportunity to compete in the “Big Leagues,” reminding us it took 10 visits to Tour School to earn his card. Say what you will, that shows grit.

When asked what his faith journey meant to him, Mark didn’t hem and haw: “It’s one thing to acknowledge Jesus died to save the world; it’s another to say ‘he died for me.’”

When any man talks like this, we immediately recognize that Christ Jesus is not peripheral to his life. For Mark, it’s central.

Reflecting on the gruesome death Jesus experienced on the cross, this PGA Champion didn’t hesitate to honor Jesus’ willingness to endure unspeakable agony, indescribable shame, and relational alienation from the Father because of the “joy set before him.”

If you are wondering what “the joy set before him was,” it’s a great question to ponder! Two things come to mind: First, Jesus’ driving passion was to glorify his Father. Second, he lived to die—to rescue a multitude from the clutches of sin and irreversible eternal death.

Regarding the first point, Jesus’ entire existence revolved around bringing glory to the Father. His unwavering motive was to honor God the Father by perfectly obeying the law—the life we should have lived.

Regarding the latter, paying the penalty for those who knowingly break the commandments, Jesus saw beyond the ignominy of the cross a multitude of redeemed sinners who will constitute his family for

all eternity.

Jesus saw beyond the profound agony and shame of the injustice inflicted upon him, hanging on a Roman gibbet, when he willingly surrendered himself to pagan Rome and wayward Judaism; in truth, it was all of us who put him on that tree.

What joy was set before him? What was it that he saw? He saw a seat at the Father’s right hand—a seat, mind you, that could only be rewarded to the one who humbled himself by dying in place of others (Philippians 2).

He saw a future world filled with redeemed men and women from every tribe, language, people, and nation. Borrowing from Paul, Jesus saw his bride seated at his right hand, ruling the world to come.

Whatever awaits those who follow Christ in this life is far beyond what we can imagine. Pause to ponder what Jesus saw! Pause to consider what the future holds! You don’t want to miss out on that!

Prayer: Jesus! Give us eyes to see what Jesus saw.

READING: Philippians 2:1-11; Romans 3:21-26; Hebrews 12:1-2

1. Almost every round features low moments like an OB or a “quad.” How does one navigate that and then post a good score?

2. From our suggested reading, what can we learn about the driving motives of Jesus’ self-giving?

3. Application: Wrestle with what altering our lives to live for his glory looks like.
