



Links Players

I Pick You...And You...And You...

For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love, he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will... (Ephesians 1:4-6, NIV)

As an avid Ryder Cup fan, I closely watched the run-up to the August 27th announcement of the six “Captain’s Picks” that would complete the 12-man U.S. Ryder Cup Team.

While there was drama surrounding whether Keegan Bradley would be both a captain and a playing participant on this year’s team, it was equally interesting to see who his six choices would be.

In filling the six open spots on the team, Bradley and his advisors relied on objective factors such as the number of wins in the prior two-year period, rankings, and strokes gained data across various categories.

They also relied on subjective factors such as how well a player would impact “team chemistry,” how they were likely to play at Bethpage, and a player’s late-season performance.

In the end, Bradley chose six players he believed would be the best “fit” for the team, even though there were three other players (other than Bradley himself) who were higher on the “objective points list.”

The anxiety and stress experienced by players striving to make the team are immense. Living in the “bubble of uncertainty” is nerve-wracking. Season 2 of the Netflix series, Full Swing, captured the intensity of the process when it filmed Captain Zach Johnson’s phone call to Keegan Bradley informing him that he was not chosen to be on the U.S. Team. Bradley later described the experience as “devastating and painful.”

In our faith journey, God’s perfect plan for each of us does not depend on objective and subjective data. We do not have to live with anxiety, stress, and uncertainty as to our fate. God’s plan is clear.

He desires that all people would be saved and come to repentance. (1 Timothy 2:3-4, NIV). Peter writes that God does not want “anyone to perish but everyone to come to repentance.” (2 Peter 3:9, NIV).

In Ephesians 1:4, we learn that God chose us “before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.” Jesus, speaking directly to his disciples (and by extension to us), declares: “You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit— fruit that will last.” (John 15:16, NIV)

We were not picked because of anything that we do or might do in the future. Rather, we were chosen according to His own purpose and grace (2 Timothy 1:9) and out of His love, grace, and mercy, and for His glory. (Ephesians 1:5-6, NIV).

Having been given this wonderful gift, what ought our response to be?

Now, the “ball is in our court.” It is up to us to come to Him. Both Peter and Paul illustrate the “next steps.” In Acts 2:21, Peter declares: “And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

Likewise, Paul writes: “For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved...Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” (Romans 10:10-13, NIV). The path is clear and unobstructed. We must repent, accept, and believe in Jesus as our Lord and Savior.

We are not like Ryder Cup hopefuls who, every two years, experience nerve-wracking anxiety, sleepless nights, and uncertainty as to whether they will be selected as part of a team representing their respective countries.

We do not have to live in a bubble of uncertainty with all the attendant stresses and turmoil because God chose us by his grace and mercy.

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, we praise you; we worship you; and we thank you for choosing us to be your sons and daughters. Help us live a life that is pleasing to you.

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