



Links Players

Pardoned

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6: 23)

...if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. (Romans 10:9)

An interesting thing happened at the 2012 Verizon Heritage at Hilton Head. In a sudden-death playoff against Jim Furyk, Brian Davis hit an approach shot into a hazard on the first playoff hole.

On his swing from the hazard, Davis felt his club might have slightly brushed a loose reed or grass in the hazard on his backswing. Under the rules at the time, grounding the club or improving the lie in a hazard called for a two-stroke penalty, and he called a penalty on himself.

When reviewed in high-definition video, any contact was imperceptible, but Davis stood by his conviction that his club made contact and insisted the penalty should apply. This honorable move ended the playoff and handed the victory to Furyk.

The honor of the game we love rests upon the observance of well-defined rules. Penalties are applied without prejudice. Golf is a game of honor, and with only rare exceptions, players respect the rules and strictly adhere to calls made by rules officials. This is a proud distinction of the game we love.

If only we lived life to the same standard. In His sovereign love and care for us, God has exhausted every effort to provide us with redemption and has spared no effort to make clear the path to eternal forgiveness of our sins through faith in Jesus Christ.

In His word, we have an exhaustive course layout and rulebook. It's very short – ten rules. No club dues or green fees, but importantly, there are no mulligans.

What happened at Hilton Head brings to mind another story. In the 1820's, a man named George Wilson was convicted in Pennsylvania of robbery, murder, and sentenced to death by hanging.

After a series of pleas by friends, President Andrew Jackson issued an official presidential pardon, which should have saved Wilson's life. However, in an unprecedented act, Wilson refused the pardon, giving no explanation, and left President Jackson in quite a quandary, who then turned the matter over to the Supreme Court.

The question was "Can a person be pardoned against their will?"

Chief Justice John Marshall delivered the Court's opinion, which, though rational, is nonetheless chilling. "A pardon is a deed, and like any deed, it must be accepted to take effect." Since Wilson had clearly and deliberately rejected the pardon, the original sentence stood. Wilson was hanged.

This bears an eerie similarity to man's response to the offer of Jesus from the cross and to the plain words of scripture.

Confessing a wrong to a friend or foe is never pleasant and can provoke a response we don't expect. All, without exception, have been on both sides of offenses and know firsthand the joyful relief that comes with those confessions.

Conversely, you may have experienced the loss of a relationship that can arise when an offense goes unresolved.

Our God has spared no effort to make clear and certain the effect on His heart our confession brings – His promise to us of forgiveness, eternal life with Him, and peace with God. His offer makes it easy, but “it must be accepted to take effect.”

Prayer- Father, according to your word, I confess I am a sinner. I believe in my heart your Word that you raised Jesus from the dead. Thank you for your amazing gift of eternal life. In Jesus name I pray. Amen.

—

Rob Clark

Copyright 2026 Links Players International

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