

LINKS PLAYERS

DAILY DEVOTIONAL FRIDAY BIBLE STUDY FOR APRIL 12, 2013

'WAIT FIVE MINUTES'

This is an illustration for the present time, indicating that the gifts and sacrifices being offered were not able to clear the conscience of the worshiper. (Hebrews 9:9, NIV)

THERE IS A REASON YOU'LL BE GLUED TO YOUR SET ON SUNDAY AFTERNOON. This is because there is nothing quite like Sunday's back nine at the Masters, with one risk-reward hole after another at Augusta National. Runaway wins are rare at the Masters, just because it's common for a challenger to run off a string of birdies and chase down the panicking leader.

In some cities, they say, "If you don't like the weather, wait five minutes." The same is true on Sunday afternoon at the Masters, where CBS commonly posts where the leaders stood at 3 PM, 4 PM, and 5 PM. The changes on the scoreboard are that dramatic.

It's a good thing our lives are not so volatile. Few of us could handle the stress of such frenetic living.

And yet, when it comes to sin, I have heard teachers and learners alike speak openly of how we cannot live much more than the proverbial five minutes without falling again. Our minds, our hearts are that transient, that unfaithful.

The writer of Hebrews captured this sense when he wrote of the tabernacle sacrifices made by the priests for the atonement of the people. If ever there was an indictment of rote religious actions, this was it. Here the priests were making the very sacrifices that God himself had prescribed, yet in and of themselves those offerings amounted to nothing. They could not clear the conscience of the giver, the worshiper. He would walk back into the world and, as we have suggested, fall back into sinful thought, word or action in a few minutes' time.

As an unveiling of what was really necessary—a permanent, universal sacrifice—however, these temple acts were helpful. They exposed the sin of the worshiper, in the same way that our sin is exposed now when we are challenged by the holiness of God. But while there is no lasting forgiveness in an act of mere religion, there is no lasting disgrace in our sin—not when we turn to the one who came as that lasting sacrifice, not when we give our lives (including all our sin) to the Savior, Jesus Christ.

Opening questions: Mastery

What do you enjoy most about watching the Masters? Why do you think this particular tournament is transcendent enough to gain general sports viewers and not just golf fans?

Our flesh

Bible translations alternately refer to our penchant for sin as our "sin nature" or our "flesh." Read Romans 3:23, Galatians 5:16-17, Galatians 6:3, and James 2:8-11. What do these passage reveal about sin in general? What do they point out as sin in you personally?

Now go back to Romans 4 and read verse 24 in conjunction with verse 23. What knowledge and assurance do we gain from viewing the whole juxtaposition of these verses?

Christ's provision

Read Hebrews 9:1-15. What was lacking in the religious operations of the priests in the tabernacle? What was revealed through those actions?

What did Christ provide and how did he do it? What ability is enabled in us by his cleansing of our consciences (v. 14)?
