

LINKS PLAYERS

DAILY DEVOTIONAL FRIDAY BIBLE STUDY FOR SEPTEMBER 27, 2013

TO THE END

“Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy.” (John 16:22, NIV)

AS GOLFERS, WE HAVE ALL DONE IT, from the top-level pro right down to the once-a-month hacker. We’ve griped after a bad drive then hit a miracle recovery. We’ve begged our chip to get closer, complained that it didn’t, then holed the par putt all the same.

In the middle of our circumstances, we can’t see the beginning from the end.

When Jesus spoke to the disciples in John 16, he was “premind[ing]” them of what Paul would later write to the Romans: “We know that in all things God works together for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose” (Romans 8:28). Certainly you’ve heard that verse before. Its popularity rests on the promise it contains—the promise we seem to be so poor at remembering.

When we fail to keep our eyes on God and the end he has in store for us—be that an earthly end to the season we’re going through right now or the grand eternal end where we land in the ongoing, sin-free presence of God—we start manifesting all sorts of unseemly behavior: anxiety, anger, grumbling, blame. What are these really? Signs of faithlessness.

So Jesus took to reminding his immediate disciples of the joy that awaited their persevering faith. He had to. They were about to enter the darkest of seasons, when he would be taken from them to the cross and die. They would scatter in fear and uncertainty, lost without their leader.

Moreover, Jesus would soon be leaving for good. After his resurrection, he would show himself to his loved ones. But this stay would be temporary, for he was going to join the Father. What then? Much trouble—hatred, persecution, death of their own. They would need visions of joy, of eternal reunion with their Savior, in those dark hours.

Maybe that is the very thing you need today—a reminder of joy, an encouragement in faith. If so, receive that reminder and that encouragement in these words and live in the strength of the Lord.

Opening questions: Laughing at ourselves

What funny story can you tell about a time when you or another responded negatively to a bad golf shot then followed it up with something great? What degree of embarrassment is layered in when this happens?

The good ahead

Read John 16:16-22. What ensuing circumstances would bring the disciples great grief? What joy would follow?

How does it apply now to our own fears and difficulties?

What added perspective does Romans 8:28 bring?

Shining like stars

Read Philippians 2:14-16. What is the opening charge in this passage?

What do complaining (grumbling) and arguing say about our faith in God? What compelling reasons did Paul give for steering clear of this behavior?

Written by Jeff Hopper ©2013 Links Players International.