

## ARE YOU QUALIFIED? 4: QUALIFIED BY SALVATION

“For the Son of Man came to seek and save what was lost.” (Luke 19:10, NIV)

MONDAY IN ONO CITY, JAPAN, the door swung open. Those whose names will appear among the tee times for this year’s US Open at Erin Hills in Wisconsin started with Satoshi Kodaira, Yusaku Miyazato, Chan Kim, and Shugo Imahira.

That’s not entirely true. Others have been in for some time. Champions from the past ten years—including superstars Dustin Johnson, Rory McIlroy and Jordan Spieth, but also Angel Cabrera and Lucas Glover—will be there. So will Masters champions, Open champions, PGA champions, US and British Amateur champions, and Players champions. But you might notice how this list repeats itself: *champions, champions, champions*. The accomplished, the expected, the ranked.

The beauty of Ono City—and Surrey, England, on Monday, and ten sites in the US on June 5—is that golfers you and I have never met will emerge. There are no slouches in the sectional qualifying fields, but there are a whole lot of unknowns. Tour pros won’t make it; anonymous range rats will.

For plenty of heartwarming anecdotal reasons, we celebrate the egalitarian roster of the US Open. And yet... where are the 22-handicappers? where is the guy who’s traded his tee times for changing diapers at midnight and working two jobs for this little family of his? where’s the low man on the maintenance totem pole whose only golf opportunity is a few putts in the fading light on the sod-displaced nursery green behind the sixth tee?

You see, salvation looks more like this last picture. Its selection process, via the sovereign will and stunning grace of God, includes the least, the lost, the last, and as we saw earlier this week, the persecutor-turned-apostle, Paul, who called himself “chief of sinners.” Indeed, all who are saved are saved from sin and its wages: death. And all who are saved are done so by Jesus, for “there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

In Luke 15, Jesus offered the parable of the prodigal son. Here is a picture of us all—trusting in our own devices, surrendered to our own temptations. And here is a picture of God, the father in waiting, desiring the return of his son, and welcoming him with embracing arms and a joyous feast. In that hour of grace, the father supplied a simple explanation for his largesse: “My son was lost and now he’s found.” This is the salvation available to all who take hold of it.

**Opening questions** Are you one who roots for the underdogs in majors, or do you like seeing the top players do their thing? • In the spiritual field, which are you—an unknown or a blue-chipper?

**READING** Luke 19:1-10; 1 Peter 1:3-5, 8-9; Romans 6:20-23

### A saved man (Luke 19)

What gives you joy in reading the account of Zacchaeus? What gives you hope in reading it?

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### The mercy of God (1 Peter 1)

What is God’s motivation in giving us new birth? What promise does this new birth hold for us? Where does our belief meet up with Christ’s salvation?

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### The life of sin, the gift of God (Romans 6)

What marks a life of sin? What allows us to escape such a life?

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Written by Jeff Hopper ©2017 Links Players International. An introductory video is available at <https://youtu.be/sN4sfQmE0Jg>.