

Sunday, June 30, 2024

Scripture Reading: Mark 5:21-43

Men fail much oftener from want of perseverance than from want of talent.
—William Cobbett

The annual Wimbledon tennis tournament begins this week in London. So let's take a moment to think about the parallels between the game of tennis and the game of life.

We begin with the “serve.” In tennis, it's all about service. If you can serve, you win. Each serve means a fresh start. Life often presents us with new beginnings. Every day is a chance to serve our best selves to the world. But this also reminds us that life, really, is all about service — service to God and service to others.

Of course, if we mess up our service, we get a second chance! Wonderful, isn't it? This is the gospel: Second serves.

Then we have those long “baseline rallies.” This speaks to us of perseverance, steadiness and resilience. Life, like tennis, is filled with rallies — moments of challenges, setbacks, and adversity. But each rally is an opportunity to grow stronger in our faith, to learn from our mistakes and to become more resilient individuals.

But, we have to watch out for “the net!” The net in tennis represents an obstacle that players must work around, or more accurately, above. The very presence of the net leads to what are called *unforced errors*. This occurs when a player hits a ball right into the net for no apparent reason. The opponent's shot is not difficult. The player just hits it without excuse into the net. Perhaps she is tired. Maybe the rally has gone on too long. She might be falling into bad habits, like not following through or keeping the racket up. Unforced errors. These are those mistakes we make for which we have no one to blame but ourselves.

“Adaptability.” Tennis players need to play on various surfaces — hard court, clay or grass — each requiring different strategies and adjustments. Similarly, life is full of changing circumstances and unexpected twists. Embracing change and remaining flexible can help us thrive in an ever-evolving world.

Finally, we're at “match point.” We're at the moment of truth, on the brink of victory, about to lay down our racket and go to our eternal rest. No more serves. No more unforced errors. No more heartache. All tears are wiped away. And we go to Center Court to receive the “crown of glory” that awaits us.

—Timothy Merrill

Prayer: O God, keep me from double faulting and unforced errors. Give me strength through every set and stage of life, and lead me to match point, finishing well. Amen.

Daily Bible Readings:

- Sunday: John 18-21
- Monday: Isaiah 10-12
- Tuesday: Isaiah 13-15
- Wednesday: Isaiah 16-18
- Thursday: Isaiah 19-21
- Friday: Isaiah 22-24
- Saturday: Psalms 67-69

Biblical Dreamers

Directions: Many stories in the Bible involve dreams. Can you match the dreamers on the right with the correct clues on the left?



_____ 1. His brothers were irritated when he told them of his dreams.

_____ 2. He saw angels going up and down a ladder.

_____ 3. This ruler dreamed about some skinny cows eating fat cows.

_____ 4. She had an unpleasant dream about Jesus and told her husband to have nothing to do with him.

_____ 5. He saw a statue whose feet were smashed by a stone.

_____ 6. He was warned to take his family to Egypt.

_____ 7. He saw a vine produce grapes and he squeezed their juice into a cup.

_____ 8. They were warned in a dream about Herod's evil plan.

- A. Pharaoh, Genesis 41:17-21
- B. The Magi, Matthew 2:12
- C. Jacob, Genesis 28:12
- D. Pharaoh's cupbearer, Genesis 40:9-11
- E. Joseph, Matthew 2:13
- F. Joseph, Genesis 37:9
- G. Pilate's wife, Matthew 27:19
- H. Daniel, Daniel 2:31-35

Verse to Remember

"These things are written so that you might come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name."

—John 20:31

FIND A WORD

How many common words of four or more letters can you find from the letters of the word below. A letter may be used only as many times as it appears in the given word. Proper names, abbreviations, contractions and foreign words are not allowed. We found 37 words (see below). If you find more, let us know! And the word is (in honor of the holiday coming next week):

INDEPENDENCE



- Answers to Biblical Dreamers:** 1F, 2C, 3A, 4G, 5H, 6E, 7D, 8B.
- Find a Word:** cede, ceded, decide, deep, deepen, deepened, deice, deiced, depend, dependence, dice, diced, dine, dined, dimmed, ended, epee, epic, iced, indeed, need, needed, nice, niece, nine, peen, pence, pend, pended, penned, piece, pieced, pied, pine, pinned, pinned.

