



SEASON TRAINING – WEEK 11

Each week, Sports Quest presents a devotional message to the HCYA Hurricanes players at the close of practice. The goal is to encourage them in their faith journey, and equip them to face the world “head on” with a Christ-centered focus. Last week, for example, the themes were “Bearing fruit for God” (Tuesday) and “Affirming God’s power through our weaknesses” (Thursday).

In this newsletter, rather than recapping the lessons, I’d like to share a devotional I wrote over the weekend. I’ve been a Christian since 1991, but I still find myself asking the question, “WHY?” Like everyone else, I see the world in turmoil. I see things that just aren’t right. I watch in despair as racial tensions raise their ugly head and recoil at the crazy antics taking place in the world of politics. And I grieve when people I care about are hurt, spoken ill of, or even pass away. Am I alone in this? Probably not. I’m sure there are many who question (perhaps even doubt) the goodness of God. For me, doubt is not an issue. I KNOW I serve a great God. I KNOW His best may not always be understandable. I KNOW how the story ends. But still, I find myself asking the nagging question...“Why?” I hope this short devo serves as an encouragement to someone today. If so, please let me know at info@sqsoccer.com. I’d love to hear from you!

WHY GOD...WHY?

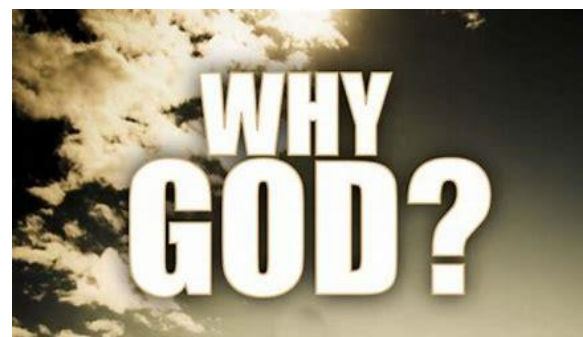
“Weeping may stay overnight, but there is joy in the morning” (Psalm 30:5)

Gruesome injuries have plagued the sport of soccer since the game began. In recent times, superstars like Djibril Cisse, Eduardo, Aaron Ramsey, Antonio Valencia, Henrik Larsson, Laurent Koscielny and many others are just some of the names that suffered horrific injuries, but somehow still managed to come back to forge a successful career.

Sadly, other stars were not so fortunate – their careers cut short prematurely with the world beckoning at their feet. Take Ben Collett for example, a starlet who joined Manchester United as a 9-year-old trainee. Collett progressed seamlessly through the U-17s and U-19s in 2001, and his performances in the 2002/03 season led to him receiving the Jimmy Murphy Young Player of the Year award, a highly prestigious accolade given to the likes of United legends Ryan Giggs, Paul Scholes and Phil Neville during their time at the club.

On May 1, 2003, a week after winning the FA Youth Cup, Collett’s bright future came crashing down in a game against Middlesbrough. Following an ill-timed tackle by Middlesbrough’s Gary Smith, Collett’s leg was broken in 2 places, ending his career days before he was to be offered a 3 year contract at the club. Effectively, Collett lost the opportunity to become a millionaire through contractual agreements and merchandising fees. Although Collett was awarded over 5 million dollars in damages in May 2008, citing loss of future earnings, nothing could truly remove the anguish of a future star widely recognized as one of the brightest young players in the country.

Ben Collett is just one of countless players who have suffered through reckless tackles, ill-fated challenges, and innocuous circumstances. Careers shattered through no fault of their own, begging the obvious and difficult question “Why?” “Why me?” “Why now?” “Why did something so good have to end so abruptly?” And oftentimes, “Why God?” Is this a valid question? After all, we all want to know the reasons behind the “what”; it’s just human nature. Surely God owes us a response? Why do the good die young? Why do the “bad” live long and seemingly, full lives: no illness, no disease, no tragedies? It just doesn’t make sense when we see a good, kind, loving and gracious God apparently turning a blind eye to the injustices of the world. This haunting question, “why” is certainly a stumbling block for many unbelievers, and indeed, a major dilemma for followers of Christ. All of us cry out when life throws us a curve ball – when darkness overshadows the light that shone so brightly just moments before.



Rachel’s death in Genesis 35:19 is a prime illustration of a situation where we read in astonishment the “treatment” of a woman experiencing the greatest joy – that of giving birth. As her second son to Jacob was being born, she apparently began hemorrhaging. With her last breath, she named him, “Ben-oni” which means “son of my sorrow”, but Jacob wanted to make

his wife's dying gift properly remembered, so he called his child, "Benjamin" which means "the son of my right hand", the most honored son. On one side of the coin, here's an incredible blessing to Jacob and Rachel. Yet on the other, overwhelming sorrow as Jacob loses his wife, and his wife is only able to witness the birth of Benjamin during her last seconds on earth. Ironically, it was Rachel who had previously told Jacob, "Give me sons, or I will die" (Genesis 30:1). Now that she had children, her days ended! Inexplicable in human terms, but God, in His infinite wisdom, allowed (allows) the unthinkable to happen. The truth stated in Isaiah is hard to stomach, but that does not negate its trustworthiness, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, and your ways are not my ways. This is the Lord's declaration. For as heaven is higher than earth, so my ways are higher than you're your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." (Isaiah 55:8-9). Comforting words; defiant counsel; salve to the soul. But still the pain lingers and the questions remain.



As believers in Christ, we MUST continue to seek God first rather than search for answers for all the "why" questions which keep us awake at night. We live in a broken, fallen world, but that is not the end of the story. Our sojourn here on earth is but a fleeting, sometimes breathtaking but often heartbreaking interlude before we get to experience the joys and jewels of heaven.



Consider the first Christian martyr, Stephen, who in his last moments, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing there at the right hand of God (Acts 7:55-56). Jesus...Standing...At the right hand of God! What a sight that must've been and what a source of joy to know that His Lord and Savior was waiting for him once the trials of this life had passed away. And we must linger too on Jesus Himself – Son of God – God in the flesh, who came into this world not to make us better people, but to purchase us with His precious, perfect blood on the cross. Our sins became His, yet He endured the agony and humiliation for our sakes.



Yes – life is tough. It is cruel, unkind, unfair and unimaginably painful at times. It was for Jesus and it is for us. But this world is not all there is. Greener pastures await. We may NEVER know the reason "why" a tragedy takes place or why the world seems to be spinning out of control. But, we CAN rest in the assurance that one day, all will be made right. Our questions will be answered, and our tears of mourning will be turned to endless joy – laughter and exhilaration at the prospect and promise of life everlasting – with Jesus and all those who belong to Him. Oh when we get to heaven...what a day of rejoicing that will be!



*"Sing the wondrous love of Jesus; Sing his mercy and his grace.
In the mansions bright and blessed; He'll prepare for us a place.
When we all get to heaven, what a day of rejoicing that will be!
When we all see Jesus, we'll sing and shout the victory!"*

*While we walk the pilgrim pathway, clouds will overspread the sky.
But when travelin' days are over, not a shadow, not a sigh.
When we all get to heaven, what a day of rejoicing that will be!
When we all see Jesus, we'll sing and shout the victory!"*

*Onward to the prize before us! Soon his beauty we'll behold.
Soon the pearly gates will open, we shall tread the streets of gold.
When we all get to heaven, what a day of rejoicing that will be!
When we all see Jesus, we'll sing and shout the victory!"*

Songwriters: Carmichael Ralph, Wilson E, Hewitt E

Looking forward seeing everyone on Tuesday!

Jim Spence

Head Coach - HCYA Hurricanes www.HCYASoccer.com

Founder - Sports Quest www.SQSoccer.com / info@sqsoccer.com / 832.593.7777

SPORTS QUEST
"Sharing Biblical truth to reach, teach & encourage next generation leaders through soccer"

"I can do ALL things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13)