



May 8, 2008

Living a No-Hitter

Throwing a no-hitter is the dream of every baseball player. In Major League Baseball (MLB) it is a rare feat indeed.

Consider that there are 30 MLB teams that each played 162 regular season games in 2007. That is a total of 4,860 pitching starts during the regular season. However, there were only 3 no-hitters all year. Obviously, a no-hitter is both a rare and an amazing accomplishment.

Tuesday night, Gavin Floyd of the Chicago White Sox had a no-no going in the ninth inning against the Minnesota Twins when ESPN went live to the game and I happened to be watching.

The first thing I noticed were the game's statistics. Floyd only had four strike outs which means that he had accounted for just 4 of the 25 outs at the time. His teammates' gloves and throwing arms accounted for the other 21. Truly, the no-hitter was a team effort.

The second thing I noticed were the Sox' R-H-E numbers. 1-0-2. Though the Sox had a no-hitter going, they had committed two errors. How interesting that here was a team that had committed errors along the way and yet they still found themselves on the precipice of a tremendous accomplishment.

The situation reminded me of a particular Christ-follower in Scripture. The apostle Paul, as he looked back over his ministry at the end of his life, penned these words: *I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith* (2 Timothy 4:7). Interesting comments coming from the same man who wrote Romans 7:14-25. By his own admission he did things he didn't want to do. He was less than perfect and yet he succeeded in his walk with the Lord. He committed errors along the way and yet still lived a no-hitter.

How can we reconcile these two passages written by Paul? Consider the term "blameless" in Scripture. Blameless does not mean someone is perfect, it means the person has righted their wrongs. It means that when a Christ-follower falls short of perfect, they make it right. The Christ-follower pays what they owe. The Christ-follower does what he says he will do. When he commits an error, the Christ-follower makes it right. He makes amends. He apologizes. He seeks to make it right.

Christ's call on your life is to live well and to finish well. Though you are a sinner, you can, because of the work of Christ in your life, live well and finish well. We strive for true holiness, but we can't ever

quite reach it. However, what every Christ-follower can reach is the threshold of blamelessness. Every believer can right their wrongs as the Holy Spirit reveals them to the believer. You can right your wrongs and I can right my wrongs. And when we right our wrongs, we are blameless. And if we keep righting our wrongs along the way, then one day at the end of our lives we will also be able to look back and say *I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.*

Live a no-hitter.

NEHBC Membership

During the Discovery Class, potential members of NEHBC are taught the expectations of our members:

1. Regular attendance in a worship service and Bible Study class
2. At least one place of ministry/service in our church
3. Tithing.

I recently heard it explained as the three “Ts”: Time—attendance; Talent—service; Tithing—giving.

I want to talk about the second “T”—service. To love the Lord is to serve the Lord. Those that love Jesus, serve Jesus. Our study of 1 Corinthians over the past 18 months revealed quite clearly the Scriptural expectation of members to serve in their local church.

I believe it is the leadership’s responsibility to make ministry needs known, equip the members to do the work, and hold the members accountable to serve. It is the member’s responsibility, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to serve faithfully and sacrificially.

In an effort to better communicate NEHBC’s ministry needs and opportunities, you will see very soon a new section on our website that lists many of these needs and opportunities. Additionally, the new section of our website will have a ministry application form. One simply has to complete the various fields on the form and hit “submit” and your interest in a specific ministry will be communicated to the appropriate ministry leader. You will then be contacted to discuss further your service in the ministry of your choice.

This summer, we will have an emphasis on calling members to serve. It is time for those who are not yet, to get in the game.

Director of Childhood Ministries Search Update

We are still in the process of searching for a new director. The best way to sum up the search thus far is that I have spoken to several quality individuals who I was impressed with, but I have not found the one that I feel the Lord has tabbed for our church.

I continue to pray for the Lord’s guidance and timing. I won’t be rushed in the process. We must find exactly the right person. Only the Lord knows who that person is. But, I am excited over the anticipation of the moment when God says, “this is the one”. I can never tell exactly who it will be—because as the Lord says in 1 Samuel—we look at the outside, but the Lord looks at the heart.

Remember when the prophet, Samuel, showed up at Jesse’s house to discover who the Lord had selected as the next king of Israel? Jesse lined up the sons and Samuel admitted that they sure looked stately and king-like. But the one the Lord has selected for Israel was the least likely of all the sons—David. I don’t

want to select someone because they have a slick resume or they interview well. I want to select someone because the Lord says, “this is the one”.

In the meantime, I have to tell you that our children’s and preschool ministries are in great shape. Each of the six departments is functioning well:

1. Sunday morning Rotation Model (Sheila Slezak)
2. Sunday morning preschool ministry (Terri Osbrink)
3. Sunday evening AWANA (Mark Slezak)
4. Wednesday evening Kids on Mission (Kim Frazier/Renee Wilkens)
5. Wednesday evening preschool ministry (Wynette Taylor)
6. Early Childhood Center—our weekday preschool ministry (Angela Malaer)

We are blessed as a church with good directors at the helm of each of these six departments. They are dedicated in their leadership, love the Lord, and love the kids.

The position we are looking for provides oversight of these six departments. I have full confidence in these individuals to lead their ministries well until the vacant position is filled.

Please continue to pray for the Lord’s provision of a new Director of Childhood Ministries.

Teenage Bible Verse-Off

Picture the spelling B, but with the contestants being provided a Scripture reference and expected to recite the appropriate passage. Single elimination. Every word has to be correct. A full-ride to this summer’s mission trip on the line.

This past August, our teenagers and their parents were informed that participants in our Summer-08 mission trip would require that the teens qualify. Binders were distributed to each teen with sections such as “Quiet Times”, “Sermon Notes”, “Scripture Memory”; “Ministry Service”. Students who completed the binders would qualify to go on the mission trip.

This past Sunday evening there was a verse-off among the teens that completed the binder. Teens went head-to-head to see who could still recite all the Scripture passages. I got to be a special guest at the event.

The final round consisted of three teens. Round and round they went until finally one dropped out. The contest ended in a tie between the final two. Though only the winners got the Grand Prize, every teen that participated in the contest got \$100 toward their trip.

I could not be more proud of our teens. Watching them recite verses at a microphone in front of their peers and some staff members was not easy and yet they rose to the occasion. I thought back to August when the teens thumbed through the “Scripture Memory” section and looked overwhelmed. Yet, here they were eight months later reciting those Scripture passages at a microphone. In a day of cotton candy youth ministry, the teens of NEHBC are being trained in the Word of God. It’s a beautiful thing.

Fast Facts

- 10 days until Sportsmen's Day.
 - Saturday, May 17. 1-7pm. Enough Texas BBQ for 1,000 men to have large helpings. Exotic meats: kangaroo; elk; alligator. Large give-a-ways. THE men's event of the year.
- Two weeks from today the Estonia mission trip will be upon us.
 - Five churches; 30 people; 33,000 Bibles and tracts; 5 days of distribution.