

“You Win Some, You Lose Some.”
Mark 6:1-13

233 years ago, a group of men met in a room in Philadelphia and they finalized a document that we know today as the Declaration of Independence. The declaration was in essence, a letter to King George III informing him that the American colonies were all done with being colonies and that we were now a sovereign nation.

The King of England did not take this news lying down! He did not welcome the idea of losing the American colonies! What followed then was another seven years of our War for Independence culminating in the signing of the Treaty of Paris on September 3, 1783.

According to some historians, losing the American colonies came as such a blow to King George that he succumbed to mental illness and was referred to the care of a doctor who specialized in treating such illnesses. Hollywood even made a movie about it, *The Madness Of King George*, and it was in theaters around 1994.

According to the movie at least, King George eventually had to come to terms with his loss and accept the fact that the American colonies were now known as the United States of America. One line from the movie has him saying, *“Well, I suppose we shall have to get used to it!”*

You win some, you lose some.

The game of baseball is not nearly as important as life, but for some of us it *does* irrationally rank up there somewhere. One of the worst teams in the history of the major leagues is the 1962 New York Mets.

They played 160 games during that season and they lost 120 of them, finishing with a record of 40-120. Their pitching staff gave up 948 runs that season, a major league record.

After the Mets played their final game of the 1962 season, manager Casey Stengel called his team together in the clubhouse for one last pep talk. He said to them, *“Fellers, don’t feel too bad about this. It’s been a team effort all the way.”*

You win some, you lose some.....even when you win 40 and lose 120.

This applies also to trying to live an authentic Christian life. Anyone who commits themselves to Christ and therefore dedicates their life to being a Christian -- they will experience this as well. Some people will be attracted to your faith while others will be repelled by it.

Jesus understood this from His own experience in Nazareth, and so He said to His disciples: *“Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave the place. If any place will not welcome you and they refuse to hear you, as you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them.”* (verses 10 & 11)

There are some people who were then -- and are now -- receptive to the Gospel. Then there are others who won't have a thing to do with it. Jesus is telling His followers not to waste their time with those who give them the straight arm. Instead, go on to those who are more receptive. Another way of putting it follows an old adage: *“Never try to teach a pig to sing. It wastes your time and it annoys the pig.”*

For some of you, you are probably perceived by your friends and relatives, co-workers and neighbors as being “religious” because you attend a church. Maybe at family reunions some of your relatives are thinking: *“Here they come....our religious relatives from Kiel.”* It's okay, I understand...I get it, too. Only I get it double because I also happen to be a minister.

I don't know if your family ever argues with you about religious belief, but here is something to bear in mind: “Shaking the dust off your feet doesn't mean that you disown them, but it does mean that you don't waste your energy and blood pressure getting into a big argument with them. Remember this -- it is the **Holy Spirit** who actually converts a person; not you.

You win some, you lose some.....in the context of our story today this applies to any person who is trying to live their life as a disciple of Jesus Christ. Some people will be attracted by your faith, but others will not. Share your faith with those who will!

The whole idea of you-win-some-you-lose-some also translates into the wider truth that we have a God who loves us in spite of our imperfections. It also means that there is more to life than winning the grand prize all of the time. It isn't always a bad thing to fall short somewhere.

There is a true story about a family of Sicilian immigrants who had a rich family tradition of being in the fishing business. The family had been fishermen for the past 300 years, from generation to generation. All the way over from Sicily to America.

In that family was a man who had five sons, and it was his desire for

each of his boys to learn the fishing trade and carry on the family business. Each of the boys did well in living up to their father's expectations; all that is except for the second youngest son, whose name was "Joe."

Young Joe would dream up every excuse that he could think of in order to get out of helping his dad and four brothers on the fishing boat. He wanted no part of the family's fishing business! The smell of raw fish -- living or dead -- nauseated him and caused him to vomit.

Needless to say, Joe's proud Sicilian father was unsympathetic to his son's plight and was supremely disappointed in him. He called Joe "*Lazy and good for nothing*" and told him that he was blowing his one and only chance to make something out of his life.

Well, young Joe wasn't much of a fisherman but he was a pretty good ballplayer, and so young Joe DiMaggio decided to give the big leagues a try -- and the rest, as they say -- is "history." Joe was grateful not only for getting away from the smelly fish, but also for his chosen career. It was, after all Joe DiMaggio, who said: "*I want to thank the Good Lord for making me a New York Yankee.*"

You win some, you lose some.....and just because you fail somewhere, that DOES NOT mean that you will fail EVERYWHERE.

Many of you like to feed the birds. You delight in attracting brilliant red cardinals and amazing humming birds to your backyards. If you like birds then, you'll undoubtedly recognize the name of John James Audubon, who is associated with many magnificent paintings that he did of North American birds. What you may not know however, is that Mr. Audubon got started at bird-painting only after he had failed at something else. He had owned and operated a retail store, which went bankrupt after being in business for eleven years. (I guess he decided that being a merchant was for the birds!)

When Jesus said "shake the dust off your feet and move on" He was essentially saying "You win some, you lose some."

Here is something else that should be pointed out: EVERYONE IN THIS ROOM IS A SUCCESS STORY.

You might be thinking, "*But pastor, you don't understand! You don't realize the number of times I've failed!*"

I don't care. The truth is, you've still succeeded at something. If you've ever done something as simple and ordinary as painting a picket fence the right way, or if you've made someone's day -- then you've

succeeded.

God put us here on this earth to glorify Him with our words and our deeds, however basic they may be. Then, God redeemed us at the cross of Christ in order to adopt us as His sons and daughters. (Ephesians 1:5)

No one enjoys losing. No one enjoys failure. No one thrives on rejection. Jesus certainly could not have felt good about the brush-off that He was given in Nazareth. His disciples would be rejected as well.

One message of the Kingdom is, *“Shake the dust off your feet and move on.”* In Christ there will be more tomorrows.

There was a man whose job it is to go out and hire executives for companies who seek them. Such a recruiter is often referred to as a “Head-hunter.” Josh McDowell tells about this one executive recruiter/head hunter in particular who explains his method: *“When I get an executive that I’m trying to hire for someone else, I like to disarm him. I offer him a drink, take my coat off, then my vest, undo my tie, throw up my feet and talk about baseball, football, family, whatever, until he’s all relaxed. Then, when I think I’ve got him relaxed, I lean over, look him square in the eye and say, ‘What’s your purpose in life?’ It’s amazing how top executives fall apart at that question.*

“Well, I was interviewing this fellow the other day, had him all disarmed, with my feet up on his desk, talking about football. Then I leaned up and said, ‘What’s your purpose in life, Bob?’ And he said, without blinking an eye, ‘To go to heaven and take as many people with me as I can.’ For the first time in my career I was speechless.”

Now THAT is a winning strategy for life if there ever was one. AMEN.