

Pk's Perspectives... Standing for Christ

San Jose Sharks (NHL) goaltender James Reimer boycotted the team's warmup skate before its 4-1 home loss to the New York Islanders on March 18th because his teammates wore jerseys that support the LGBTQIA+ community.

As part of a weeklong series of events that the team says "continue a long-standing commitment of allyship with the LGBTQIA+ community," San Jose players wore special jerseys for Sharks Pride Night that are designed by Houyee Chow, a queer artist from San Jose. The jerseys, featuring a Pride crest and a "Love Wins" patch, were to be auctioned off after the game for charity to raise funds for Adolescent Counseling Services. Reimer said the Pride Night jerseys conflict with his Christian beliefs. He did not play Saturday. *(per Greg Wyshynski @ ESPN)*

As you might imagine, Reimer's choice was not well received by all. But I so appreciate the Gospel clarity and humility of his tweet when addressing the "Why?" of his faith decision to not participate in his team's Pride event:

"Under the umbrella of the NHL's "Hockey is for Everyone" initiative, the San Jose Sharks have chosen to wear jerseys in support of the LGBTQIA+ community tonight.

"For all 13 years of my NHL career, I have been a Christian — not just in title, but in how I choose to live my life daily. I have a personal faith in Jesus Christ who died on the cross for my sins and, in response, asks me to love everyone and follow Him. I have no hate in my heart for anyone, and I have always strived to treat everyone that I encounter with respect and kindness.

"In this specific instance, I am choosing not to endorse something that is counter to my personal convictions which are based on the Bible - the highest authority in my life.

"I strongly believe that every person has value and worth, and the LGBTQIA+ community, like all others, should be welcomed in all aspects of the game of hockey."

Reimer is an unrestricted free agent this summer and acknowledged that his decision could impact his future in the market. "I'd be lying if I said that wasn't something that crossed my mind honestly," Reimer said. Counting the cost...yet still choosing to honor Christ. You've got to respect this guy!

I consider James Reimer a textbook example of a Christ follower living out the exhortation in 1 Peter 3:15-16: "But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander." Are you okay standing solo when the moment calls for someone - anyone - to stand for Christ? Grace & peace, love you. PK