

Invisible Doors

by Sam Dilbeck

It signaled a seismic shift in world history, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house...and I will make of you a great nation” (Gen. 12:1-2). With those words, God called the children of Abraham out of the world. The rest of the Old Testament chronicles the nation’s struggle for righteousness.

God’s chosen nation was called Israel and it faced many trials. It endured slavery, rebellion, listlessness, and starvation. But God sustained them. In time the nation sinned against God by trusting in false gods, idols, and even their own strength. They ignored God’s plea, “Be holy, for I am holy” (Lev. 19:2).

After a time of discipline in foreign lands, God restored a fire-refined remnant back to Israel. They rebuilt their society, the temple, and their relationship with God. They cut off the false gods and idols, but many went too far. In an effort to be holy, they forgot to be a blessing.

By the first century the Pharisaic subculture within the nation gained a strong foothold. The name, Pharisee, comes from *parush* meaning “separated ones,” and that captures their exclusive, self-righteous attitudes.

Once Simon, a Pharisee, invited Jesus to dinner. While they ate, a woman known in the city as a sinner wetted Jesus’ feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. Then she anointed his feet with oil. Simon watched in horror and said within himself, “If this man were a prophet, he would have

known who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him, for she is a sinner” (Luke 7:39).

The Pharisees thought salvation was for the Clean, the Perfect, the Smooth, and the Popular. Jesus sought those as well as the Dirty, Imperfect, Rough, and Unpopular. As Paul exclaimed, “While we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8). The Jews desperately needed that lesson, and some Christians need to learn it today.

In many churches invisible doors separate members from the undesirables. The front doors are always open and manned by greeters, but members often hide behind invisible doors waiting to see if the visitors are worthy of the inner sanctum.

For the Jews, the invisible doors kept the Gentiles and foreigners at bay. In the church, the invisible doors keep out tattoos, stale cigarette odors, shabby clothes, yellow teeth, and oily hair. James said, “You pay attention to the one who wears the fine clothing...while you say to the poor man, ‘Stand over there’” (Jas. 2:1-3).

But when Jesus built his church, there were no invisible doors. He welcomed everyone from the upper crust to the discarded and ignored. The simple fact is everyone needs Jesus, and the church ought to work hard to make everyone know they are wanted and welcome.

As the world continues to divide and splinter over prejudice and hate, the church must shatter the invisible doors and unite everyone under Christ’s banner of love.

Why I No Longer Support the Olympics

by Sam Willcut

The Summer 2012 Olympics was the very last that I supported with my viewing. Make no mistake—my family and I tried to watch as much as we could, and we generally have supported the Olympics throughout the years with our viewership. I have even written bulletin articles addressing the positive qualities that we are able to take from such (need for preparation, playing within the rules, striving for a common goal and such like). Nevertheless, the more I learn about what truly takes place “behind the scenes,” the more I see as a viewer and the older (and I hope more mature) I get, the more disgusted I have become—so much so, that I no longer support them with my viewing. Please do not get me wrong or misunderstand the nature of this article—I simply want to share some things for you, the reader, to think and consider as I provide reasons why I, personally, have made this decision. Before I proceed, this is not a blanket condemnation of everyone who participates or enjoys such, as I realize that with most everything, there are always exceptions. Yet, from what I have gathered, I believe they are quite rare. I no longer support the Olympic Games because they are primarily about the following three things.

First, the Olympics are primarily about sports. If you are relatively young, you are probably thinking, “Duh!” but allow me to expand. The older I get, the more I see sports becoming a god to many people, especially right here in our own nation—the United States of America. We are proud when we are able to attain more gold medals (or more medals cumulatively) than any other nation, and as the end of the games draws near, we watch the medal count even closer. It ought to be no surprise that we are among the top countries every year, because the concept of sports plays quite a large role in the lives of Americans. From the NFL, NBA, MLB, NHL, and even to the role that college sports plays across the fruited plains, for far too many Americans, sports has become their god. It is that for which they eat, drink and breathe. Moreover, reports often come from other countries (such as China) as to the emphasis they also give to sports. It gets to the point where we may easily talk to strangers about such sporting events, but we rarely ever talk to them about Jesus Christ. We do everything we can to teach our children how to throw a baseball, but we rarely ever teach them the word of God. We are sure to get them to practice on time, but struggle to encourage them to memorize Bible verses. Yes, I admit that I am a sports fan, but I do not want it to consume my life, and when we watch it every single evening for weeks, it is too much. God must be first in my life, and

such types of games are constantly trying to push God out of the lives of more and more people every year. Make no mistake, the Greeks were among the first to elevate the athlete upon the golden pedestal of society, and we are following in their footsteps. Modern-day “coliseums” are becoming more popular than church buildings, which only shows the role that sports is playing as a modern false god in our world.

Second, the Olympics are primarily about money. Being a part of the sports world (as I discussed previously), it is all about the financial gain. Olympics are televised in such a way that viewers will watch the commercials and support the respective network broadcasting them. Olympic athletes (as well as others) will make more money from endorsements than they will the games themselves. When it comes to sports, money rules; I believe I read in some good book that the love of money is the root of all evil (1 Timothy 6:10). The American athlete may not earn very much for their medal placements, but again, when coupled with the exposure that media provides, it often leads to a lifestyle of debauchery funded by millions of dollars of revenue gained. From the earliest of Olympics, the winners would obtain a lifetime of financial ease, but with such also came bribery and cheating—we see such attempts even today among the modern athlete. Why? It is because of an unhealthy thirst for money, along with the power and prestige that it provides.

Third, the Olympics are primarily about sex. Not only is it difficult for the Christian viewer to watch ANY sport without seeing over-exposed, athletic bodies, but to read what actually takes place within the secluded Olympic Village (temporary home for the athletes competing in the games) is nauseating. One ESPN writer wrote an article entitled, “Will You Still Medal in the Morning?” (if you can stomach it, look it up online). In this expose, he described in great detail the hedonistic atmosphere that reigns during this time among the athletes. Couple this with the number of condoms that the Olympic Federation makes available (this year, 450,000 condoms, or as one author online put it, “Welcome to the most promiscuous Olympics in history,” and which prompted tabloids to dub it “the raunchiest games ever”), and it ought to make all parents seriously reconsider whether or not they want their child to strive for such mastery.

Therefore, because it sadly seems, in my humble opinion, that the Olympics have become less about friendly athletic competition between countries and general good-will between nations and more about the god of sports, the love of money and the lifestyle of hedonism that I have personally put my foot down and no longer support the Olympic Games; all I ask from you is to consider carefully such things in view of your spiritual growth.

Correspondence/Encouragement

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Mission Works

Westhill Works

Benevolence Program

Local Works

Cherokee Children's Home - www.chc4kids.org
House to House, Heart to Heart
In Search of the Lord's Way
Preaching Students - Southwest School of Bible Studies
The Truth in Love - www.ttil.tv
WVBS Online School - school.wvbs.org

Prison Works

La Poynor Prison Ministry - Steve & Carrie Handley

Foreign Works

Four Seas Bible College, Singapore - Peter & Pooi Fun Chin
New Zealand Harvest Missions - James & Emily Cammock

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Cory Myers - 512.627.6672 (Youth & Family)
Tim Cooke - 903.641.5515 (Seniors)

Prayer List

Yvonne Ainsworth went back in for surgery Thursday due to an infection.

James Olsen is home and recovering.

Amy Parrish is also home from the hospital.

Lori Mosley, former member of Westhill, has been diagnosed with early stage cancer, and will be receiving treatment.

Myrna Haufe's sister passed away Wednesday in Ohio. Her service was held yesterday.

Velma McDougald's sister, Eva Nell Harris of Seagoville, passed away last Sunday. Her service was held last Thursday.

Continue to Remember: James Ainsworth, Gayle Garner, Velma McDougald, Bud Moore, Henry & Eula Parrish, Patty Williams, Johnny Fullbright, Meagan Gould, Connie Ivie, Iris Ramsey

Service Men: Clay Bayes, Jason Book, Alston Compton, Robert Johnson, Ryan Payne, Douglas Ramsey, Ryan Stewart

Announcements

We rejoice that Justin Howard was baptized last Tuesday. His contact information is on page 3.

Attention Tuesday's Young at Heart class: the meat will be provided for lunch. We ask that you bring vegetables or desserts. We look forward to seeing you there.

SYS at Brown St. in Waxahachie. We will leave at 5:30 pm Tuesday. All incoming 6th graders are welcome to join us.

Our Benevolence Program is providing school supplies to families in need this year. We are excited to be able to help families from **two schools** this time, Carroll Elementary & Navarro Elementary. If you'd like to join us August 13 from 2:00 to 4:00 pm to meet the families we are assisting, we would love to have you. (All supplies have been taken care of, no donations needed.)

Save the Date! Back to School Promotion Weekend starts Saturday afternoon, September 3rd, at the church building. Youth (6th-12th grades) will be hosted in members' homes overnight. This weekend is designed to welcome incoming 6th graders to the youth group and start the 2016-2017 school year off right!

Lads to Leaders Bible Bowl information is available on the flash drives at the back of the auditorium. If you are interested in participating, please pick one up. Once you have put the information on your computer, please return the flash drive to the office.

Save the Date! Fall Lectureship - October 9-12

Birthdays This Week

August 7 - Claire Barham, Rita Dominy, Jose Sosa Jr.

August 8 - Billy Stephens

August 9 - Tom Raley

August 11 - Rick Newton

August 13 - Rachel Heim

Next Week's Adult Class

Burial and Resurrection

(Mat. 27:51-28:7; Mark 16:2-14; Luke 24:1-8; John 19:31-20:17)

Records for July 31, 2016

Bible Class	181
AM Worship.....	235
PM Worship.....	N/A
Wednesday	171
Contribution	\$8,603.40

Privileged to Serve

Song Leader	Brody Owens
Opening Prayer	Justin Williams
Communion Leader	Scott Barham
Communion Servers	
Brian Hand	Don Ivy
Ricky Jennings	Percell Milton
Buck Murphy	Aubrey Parrish
Austin Roughton	Billy Roughton
George Schmidt	Jose Sosa, Jr.
Robby Thomas	Lynn Webster
Mike Wylie	
Closing Prayer	Greg Olsen
Nursery	Kathy Pruitt, Ellie Stewart, & Debbie Wylie
Security	Terry Barrett, Zach Drain, Buck Murphy
PM Song Leader	Joshua Haden
PM Opening Prayer	Ken Green
PM Closing Prayer	Gene Steinkraus
Wed. Song Leader	Justin Mahoney
Wed. Summer Series Speaker	Darrell Olsen
August Contact Elder	Paul Stewart - 903.872.3464