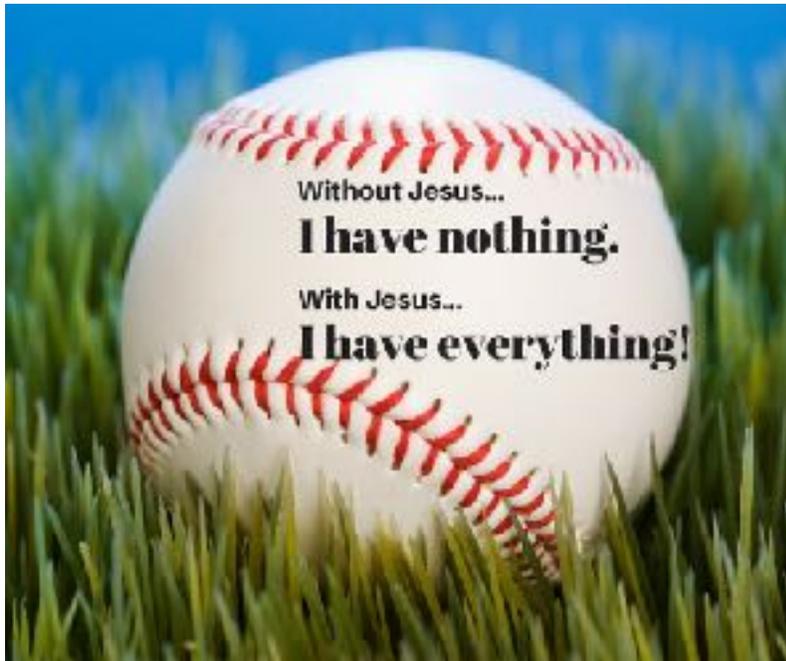


# ⇐ THE GAME CHANGER ⇒



The scene was in small town middle America at a Little League baseball game over 50 years ago where an amazing thing happened. It was a night game for the “big kids.” The ball field’s lighting was marginal with the lights concentrating on the infield and with only residual lighting in the outfield that progressively faded into blackness.

A ball was hit sharply out into right field. I had a perfect view. Note: Right field is where a weaker player

is typically placed because of low activity there. On this day John Smith was in right field. John was a big guy, both in height and girth. He wasn’t going to run down many fly balls nor was bending down his forte.

This ball was hit low and hard; it landed in front of John and bounced a few times right at him. He bent down to make the catch, yet, somehow, the ball squirted right under his glove and between his legs. I expected him to turn and in a belabored gate run after the ball into the darkness of right field, but that didn’t happen!

John nonchalantly reached his hand behind his back, retrieved another ball out of his back pocket, and in almost one motion threw it back to the second baseman as if he had made a perfect catch!

John nonchalantly ... retrieved another ball out of his back pocket...

I couldn’t believe my eyes! I thought, “Did I just see that?” I

looked around and no one else seemed to notice. John had taken what would have been an in-the-park-home-run for the batter, and turned it into a simple single. In doing so he saved the game.

John would have been left foolishly searching the darkness for the ball while the batter had already scored and the play was effectively over. Yet in reality, with his “creativity,” the batter just got a single and John looked really, really, good.

**I’m not advocating that we break the rules of baseball, but as a point of spiritual comparison, God has seemingly “broken the rules” for us.**

Scripture says, "Consequently, just as one trespass resulted in condemnation for all people, so also one righteous act resulted in justification and life for all people." (Romans 5:18-19 NIV).

We have all had our share of spiritual missed catches. We all fit the same pattern no matter what kind of person we are. It’s true whether we are one who tries to do our best, one who is about average, or one who just doesn’t try at all, or even worse, one who defiantly tries to be a screw up in every way? The Scripture has said to everyone that “We have all sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” (Romans 3:23 NIV)

Since we’ve all sinned, regardless of our effort, our trespasses result in condemnation. Consequentially, we are left to rummage around in the spiritual darkness of right field with no hope. Here’s where God has seemingly “broken the rules” for us. (God didn’t actually break the rules, he fulfilled them.)

Because Jesus, the One who had no sin, came and lived a perfect life, and offered Himself for us as payment on the cross, we are counted right before God. We are not constrained to rummage around in the darkness in futility, because God has provided the way through Jesus and His death on the cross. It is as if we had never sinned. This is the high point in human history where God “changed the rules” forever.

Don’t hold onto the old, rummaging around in the spiritual darkness; but turn to the light, to Jesus, and receive justification and life through him. Jesus took all of our sins (our spiritual missed balls) in His body on the cross and paid the consequence of them all. As we turn to Jesus and believe in Him, we receive forgiveness and a newness of life through the Holy Spirit.

Here is where many get stuck. It isn’t just saying, “I believe in Jesus,” and then forgetting about it. They miss the newness of life that the Holy Spirit brings. Believing in Jesus is just the start of an amazing walk following him. Jesus said,

**Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." John 8:12 NIV**

"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." John 8:12 NIV

Pastor Dodge described it this way, "That is not simply a promise of God's judicial action declaring us forgiven and free, it is a promise of what He intends to continue doing in the lives of all who have been freed by the blood of Jesus Christ, by His resurrection from the grave, and by His indwelling Spirit." Pastor Chris Dodge, from "Consequences."

I like the phrase of "what He intends to continue doing" in our lives. It's the exact opposite of "I believe," and "Leave me alone." It's believing in Him as savior and following wherever He leads us by His Spirit as He enables us to follow. It's Light vs. Darkness. It's Eternal Life with Him vs. eternity without Him.

In our John Smith story, little did John know that his clever act of deception on that ball field could be used as an illustration of what God has done for real and what He will do in us through Jesus. We could say, Thank you, John Smith, for showing the way!" But instead we say, "Thank you Jesus for making the way!"

## Devotion:

Spend time thinking how God has made a way for you through Jesus, the Light of the world.

Contrast the difference between life without Jesus and WITH Him.

*Prayer: Dear Father in Heaven, Thank you for providing "the game changer," Jesus Christ.....*

For more on this topic, go to Pastor's Chris Dodge's teaching entitled, "Consequences," [www.AwakeUsNow.com/messages-for-the-church.html](http://www.AwakeUsNow.com/messages-for-the-church.html) and click on the title, "Consequences." Study materials for this teaching are also available. Click and use!

For questions contact Care Minister Bob Johnson. ([bob.awakeusnow@gmail.com](mailto:bob.awakeusnow@gmail.com)).

Awake office phone: 612-545-5654.

Website [www.awakeusnow.com](http://www.awakeusnow.com) © 2015 Awake Us Now. No rights reserved.