

Where is the Goal Post?

By Ernest Underwood

It sounds simple, but the first thing one must learn in order to play football is where the goal post is – the right goal post, that is!

Occasionally we hear of a dazed player running in the wrong direction and scoring points for the other team.

In real life, it is alarmingly easy to become confused about our right goal. The Bible says that we are not to love the world or the things in the world. The world is not our goal. The chief aim and goal for human beings, made in the image of God, is heaven. Our purpose on earth is to live godly lives. The Lord say, “*Be ye holy for I am holy*” – 1 Peter 1:16.

While football is just a game, life is much, much more. But football and life have this in common – the direction we are headed in makes all the difference.

Are we headed toward that heavenly goal? Are we sure?

Regular Meeting Times

Sunday.....9:45 a.m.

Sunday.....10:45 a.m.

Wednesday.....7:00 p.m.

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Facing the Inevitability of Death

By David R. Ferguson

Many people come to the conclusion that the Book of Ecclesiastes is pessimistic and cynical. Why else would Solomon use the word "vanity" in relation to the good God has done if it was otherwise? *"And I applied my mind to seek and to search out by wisdom all that is done under Heaven; it is an unhappy business that God has given to the sons of men to be busy with. I have seen everything that is done under the sun; and behold, all is vanity and a striving after wind"* (Ecclesiastes 1:13-14).

"There is nothing better for a man than that he should eat and drink and find enjoyment in his toil. This also, I saw, is from the hand of God; for apart from him who can eat or who can have enjoyment? For to the man who pleases Him God gives wisdom and knowledge and joy; but to the sinner He gives the work of gathering and heaping, only to give to one who pleases God. This also is vanity and a striving after wind" (Ecclesiastes 2:24-26).

I, for one, do not believe the Book of Ecclesiastes should be called pessimistic or even cynical. Instead, a better appellation would be to describe it as simply brutally realistic. Ecclesiastes makes the reader confront the full and dreadful significance of one's mortality. Most people, whether or not they are religious, refuse to face what death really is. But when you get right down to it, death is a calamity that nullifies all the achievements of one's human existence. Ecclesiastes strips away the myths we employ, either consciously or unconsciously, to shield ourselves from this

stark fact. In pointing out the dreadful and stark reality of death, the Book of Ecclesiastes helps us to see just how profound is our need for resurrection. More simply stated, this wonderful book drives us to seek Jesus Christ. The New Testament shares this perspective as well. Death is not a friend or even a doorway as it is popularly espoused, but a terrible, terrible enemy. It will be, however, a conquered enemy eventually. Listen to how it is described by Paul and John:

"The last enemy to be destroyed is death. When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: 'Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?'" (1 Corinthians 15:26; 54-55).

"Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire" (Revelation 20:14).

Face the inevitability of the enemy, death, with confidence. Face it with Jesus Christ! May the Lord bless us!

God's Love, Our Response

By Jack Critchfield

There are numerous passages throughout the bible that speak of God's love for mankind. In John 3:16, Jesus stated, *"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life."* Paul wrote to the Christians in Rome and said, *"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us"* (Romans 5:8). John also wrote, *"In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins"* (1 John 4:10). What God did, in sacrificing *"His only begotten Son,"* was certainly a supreme act of love.

That great act of love on God's part is the basis of the gospel, His plan for man's redemption from sin. *"Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures"* (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). It is by this gospel message that we are called to salvation (2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; Romans 1:16).

God gave His Son as a sacrifice for the guilt of our sins. His act of love for us calls for a loving response from us. The most effective way we can demonstrate our love for God, in response to His love for us already demonstrated in the gospel, is by obeying the gospel. We do that by dying to our life of sin as we're buried with Christ in baptism and raised up from that watery grave reborn, forgiven, saved in Christ (Romans 6:3-5).

God has abundantly demonstrated His love for us through the gospel message. How have we responded to His love? Have we obeyed the gospel? Read Paul's description of the final day of judgment: *"...and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power"* (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).

God expects our obedience and holds us accountable for it (2 Corinthians 5:10). Are we ready to respond to God's love for us by obeying the gospel?