



September 3, 2018

Comeback Player of the Year

“Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry.” (2 Timothy 4:11)

A good coach never gives up on a player and is in it for the “long haul.” He understands that development of the complete ballplayer is a process based on long term development and not instant reward. He is always working to lift up both the skill level and confidence of those he coaches.

At first glance the verse above seems insignificant. We may ask; so what if Mark was useful to Paul in ministry? However, it is important for us to know the earlier part of Mark’s story to see this verse as evidence of God’s life changing work.

In Acts 13 we read about the first missionary journey by Paul and Barnabas. In their ministry travels, they take Mark a rookie along. However, we learn that things did not turn out so good. In fact, after difficulties and opposition, Mark deserted Paul and Barnabas, going back home to Jerusalem. God’s work continued without Mark and later Paul and Barnabas decided to travel again, spreading the Gospel.

This time they have an argument over Mark. Barnabas wants to give Mark another chance. Paul says NO! This disagreement was so severe, that Paul and Barnabas parted ways (see Acts 15 for that part of the story). When the pressure was on and life was hard, Mark deserted the ministry and ran home. Paul was not willing to trust him again. Does this sound familiar? Have you and an assistant coach ever have a disagreement about who to start in the lineup based on past performance?

It turns out that God was not finished with Mark. You see failure does not send us beyond God’s reach in our lives. In fact, God is NEVER finished with us, no matter how mightily we fail. Yes, there are consequences to our failures. Yes, we need to repent and turn back to God. But as His children, God continues His work in our lives. No matter what you or I (or even one of your players) have done, God is not finished with us yet.

His work of changing, shaping, molding, and maturing us continues throughout our life. Like Mark, God wants us to be helpful in his ministry. When we succeed even after our failures, the comeback shines a light on Jesus. It makes him famous not us! And our one and only purpose in life is to make Jesus famous.

At the end of his life, Paul knew a different Mark. This Mark had grown and learned faithfulness. Paul saw this in his life and longed to serve with Mark once again. What a great picture of God’s work in Mark’s life.

Question: How is God shaping and changing you for his ministry? How about your players?

Challenge: Read 2 Timothy 4:11 and Acts 13 and 15. Never give up on God’s work in your life or those you coach.

Prayer: Father, thank you for working in me so that I can join in the great work of Your Kingdom.

-- Todd Burger – NOVA/DC FCA Baseball