

Daily View

“But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called ‘today’” Hebrews 3:13

October 30, 2020

Life is not like baseball... or is it?

Why does something as relatively unimportant as a game played by high-salaried men garner so much more attention than the things that actually have eternal significance? We’ll get to that but meanwhile:

IT WAS ONLY LAST WEEK
THE DODGERS FINALLY
WON THE SERIES
...against the New York Yankees.

That was the headline in *Sports Illustrated* on October 17th, 1955. It was on October 4, 1955 that I listened to game 7 of that series when the Dodgers beat the Yankees 2-0. Like the 2020 Dodgers, the “Brooklyn Bums” had a monkey on their back. They had been in the World Series four times against the Yankees — in 1947, 1949, 1952 and 1953 — but lost all of them. On this day, though, they beat the Yankees 2-0.

For many years, the World Series was, by far, the most significant event on the sports calendar each year. There was no Super Bowl back then; baseball was truly “America’s Past-time.” During the World Series, you could hear the games broadcast nearly everywhere you went — in stores, in barber shops — even in school. It was a big deal. Mel Allen, the Yankees broadcaster, was known all over the U.S. because the Yankees were in the Series so often.

Prior to 1955, I had not followed baseball very closely. I was only about 8 years old and there were no teams in California. But when I heard that game, announced by the Dodger’s broadcaster, Vin Scully, something happened that’s hard to explain: I instantly became a baseball fan(atic) and adopted

the Brooklyn Dodgers as my team. Nothing has ever or could ever change that. I’m as loyal as I can be; as Tommy Lasorda liked to say, “Dodger blue blood runs through my veins.” So, of course, I was thrilled when they finally, after a 32 year old drought, won the World Series this year.

“Fandom” is a mystery. What was it that caught my *fancy* at such a young age? Those ‘55 Dodgers were a bunch of older men that I didn’t know personally. Yet, I felt related to them. My favorite players early on were two men that looked most like some of my family members: Duke Snider reminded me of my dad and Gil Hodges looked like one of my uncles. (*Go ahead Carolin or Lexi — psychoanalyze me*).

As I got a little older, I moved on and became a more sophisticated fan. My two favorite players in the 1960s were a Jewish southpaw named Sandy Koufax and a black shortstop named Maury Wills. For the record, neither of them looked anything like any of my family members.

What’s the point of all this reminiscing? After all, we’re talking about a game in which a bunch of grown men wear uniforms and play a child’s game. Yet, there is something about it that so captures the imagination that it makes grown men and women experience a wide range of emotions during a game. For sure, the collective blood pressure of baseball fans from LA to Tampa was much higher than usual on Tuesday night.

Sports at any level provides a respite from the daily grind. A spectator, if a “fan,” exchanges his

daily stress for another type of stress and, oddly enough, that seems to help.

But back to the question at the beginning: why can’t we get as excited about eternal things as we do about baseball (or whatever you are most enthusiastic about)? Is it because the concept of “eternal” is so hard to grasp? Probably. Is it because it seems “far away?” Certainly. Is it because it’s... ever-lasting?

In a sporting event there is a defined duration during which the score is kept and, when it ends, someone has won and someone has lost. It’s all very neat and tidy and when we finish celebrating or crying, we start over.

Life is not like that. There is no specifically defined time-limit, no scoreboard to watch and no clear, declared “winner” or “loser.” But there’s this:

“The years of our life are seventy, or even by reason of strength eighty...” *Psalms 9:12*

And this,

“...it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment...” *Hebrews 9:27*

And then this,

“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left.

Matthew 25:31-33

There are some parallels to sports that we probably shouldn’t ignore.