

The Greatest Upset

Ready:

“For nothing is will be impossible with God.” – Luke 1:37

Set

I absolutely love a good upset in sports! Some of my all-time favorites are when the USA Hockey Team beat the Russians in the Olympic Games of 1980; when the NY Jets beat the Baltimore Colts in Super Bowl III; or when Buster Douglas knocked out Mike Tyson for the heavyweight title! I realize that even as I list my favorites, you were likely thinking of yours! Upsets are just fun to watch and they remind us why we play the game; no matter how impossible the odds might seem, the underdog can still “shock the world” and pull off an upset!

That’s what happened all the way back on August 12, 1919, when a powerful horse named Man O’ War suffered the only loss of his storied career. My Grandpa had a framed print of that legendary horse on one of the walls at his old farmhouse in central New York; he considered him the greatest racehorse he had ever seen. And the name of the horse who beat him – you ask – was, you guessed it, **Upset**. And while this may not have been the origin of the meaning of the term, it certainly solidified it in our language as the way we describe when the underdog beats the favorite!

But upsets don’t just happen in sports; they happen in all aspects of life. And the Bible is full of examples of when the impossible turns possible. In John 11, we read about the story when Mary and Martha sent word ahead to Jesus that they needed His help. Lazarus was sick and likely to die if Jesus didn’t get there fast. Jesus chose to take his time so that the power and glory of God could be on full display. By the time he arrived, Lazarus had been dead for four days. So, when Jesus called for Lazarus to come out of the tomb, He created the greatest upset most had ever seen. Death was the heavy favorite, but Jesus brought Lazarus back to life. Ultimately, Jesus would later defeat death and the grave once and for all by rising from the dead Himself, completing the greatest upset the world will ever see.

This is really good news for everyone who is discouraged or feeling defeated. It’s really good news for all of us who are facing what appear to be insurmountable problems. It’s as if God wants to remind us that when all hope seems lost, when the obstacle seems too big to move, when the adversity seems too hard to overcome, that nothing will be impossible with God. He’s almost telling us to expect the upset and to look for it with anticipation.

We can learn three big lessons here:

1. It’s NEVER TOO LATE for God. Sometimes it feels too late for something to be fixed. But that’s when we need to persevere in prayer and trust that God is still capable of

doing the impossible. (John 11:32-39)

2. It's NEVER TOO BIG for God. Sometimes the weight of our problems seems crushing or almost too much to bear. But that's when we need to trust in the power of God over the problem we face. (Mark 9:23)
3. It's ALWAYS FOR our GOOD and His GLORY. God promises to weave together all things for the good of those who love Him to display His glory. Even the really hard things can still be turned around and used for good. He promises that pain has a purpose if we are willing to look for the upset. (Romans 8:28)

The principle of the upset has taken on new importance to me in recent years. In many ways, it seems like evil is winning and winning big. It's easy to get discouraged by what we see going on all around us and be tempted to give up or run or even quit altogether. But God is urging us to hang on to faith, to grab ahold of just a bit more courage, to fix our eyes on Jesus and get them off our circumstances. And while our external conditions may not change or be magically fixed, our internal condition can be transformed to peace as we weather the storms and challenges in a way that honors God and points others to Him and His grace.

So, don't give up on God, because He will never give up on you. Keep believing that nothing is impossible for those who believe. And keep looking for the upsets in the toughest areas of life.

Go

- As a coach or athlete, have you experienced pressure, adversity or trials that have seemed insurmountable?
- In what ways have you experienced doubt and discouragement in those circumstances?
- What can you do right now to put the control back in the capable hands of God?

Workout

John 11:1-44; Mark 9:23

Overtime

"God, thank You that You are the author of the greatest upset in the history of the world! Help me to believe and trust that it's never too late and the challenge is never too big for You to step in and do the impossible. Help me to look for and expect the impossible."

Bible Reference:

Luke 1:37

John 11:1-44

Mark 9:23



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