

From Penalty to Victory

Ready:

“He erased the certificate of debt, with its obligations, that was against us and opposed to us, and has taken it away by nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and disgraced them publicly; He triumphed over them in Him.” – Colossians 2:14-15

Set

In December 2023, the University of Kansas Jayhawks football team broke the penalty record in a college bowl game with 18 penalties totaling 216 yards. The previous team to hold that record was the Miami Hurricanes of the 1991 Cotton Bowl with 16 penalties for 202 yards. Oddly enough, both teams won those games, but we all know that in sports it doesn't always work out this way. Penalties, fouls or rule infractions in any sport can kill our momentum, hurt us or our team and often cost us victory. Sin has the same effect in our walk with God.

I used to think that the Old Testament was just a collection of stories telling us the history of God and man, where we could find all of God's laws and rules for our life. It took me a while to realize that it's all the same big story pointing to man's failure to follow God's plan and our desperate need for His rescue and redemption.

From the very beginning in Genesis, we hear of God communicating His game plan and rules for us. Then time and time again throughout scripture, we see how our sin nature stops our forward progress with God. His Rules are clearly laid out – people step out of His will, people cry out to Him for help, and He extends grace and provides a rescue.

Paul tells us in [Romans 6:23](#) that the penalty or wages for our sin is death and an eternal separation from God. Thankfully, at the cross, Jesus picked up every single one of our flags and paid our debt!

We have always needed Christ to step in and be our rescue, not only from the enemy but from ourselves. Just as the rescued Israelites in [Exodus 16](#) longed to be back under Egyptian rule, it's we who often place ourselves back under the bondage of sins that we've already been freed from. It's the same story. Our Heavenly Father loves us enough to let us try life without Him.

The choice of walking in His victory is ours every day. But if we are following rules in the hopes of earning that victory on our own, we have missed the point. Our Victory is only in what Jesus did for us!

Go

- Has there been a time in your sport when a penalty or a foul cost you victory?

- What sins are stopping your forward progress with God right now?
- What steps can you take to walk in Christ's victory?

Workout

Genesis 3

Exodus 16

Romans 6

Overtime

“Lord Jesus, today I pray that through the power of Your Holy Spirit, You will help me to choose Your way over mine. This is not because I think I can win on my own, but because I know that You paid my penalty. You alone are my Victory! Amen.”



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