



***“Finally, let the mighty strength of the Lord make you strong. 11 Put on all the armor that God gives, so you can defend yourself against the devil’s tricks. 12 We are not fighting against humans. We are fighting against forces and authorities and against rulers of darkness and powers in the spiritual world. 13 So put on all the armor that God gives. Then when that evil day comes, you will be able to defend yourself. And when the battle is over, you will still be standing firm. ” - Ephesians 6:10-13 (CEV)***

Bear with me....for the last several days in my mind I’ve been turning over an illustration that may be of some use for us all....try this on for size....

In confirmation class last night I asked the class if they would rather practice a sport or play in the game. The answer the six of them gave was unanimous: every one of them would rather play in the game than practice.

I guess that’s not a surprise. One of the biggest complaints you will hear about sports participation from parents is that they don’t think their kids get to play enough in the games. And probably the biggest reason that kids drop out of sports is that “they don’t get to play enough.” Just doing practice and being part of the team often isn’t enough. Kids want to get in the game. The coach is fortunate if he / she can play them all!

Now some people like to practice.....for example, I like to practice golf because it gives me a chance to make adjustments and develop consistency with shot-making. But the real purpose of the practice is to get to play in the game or the match or the meet or whatever. Wouldn’t it be strange if someone only wanted to practice....never missed a practice....but on the day of the game didn’t show up when they were supposed to be a starter?

Don’t get me wrong! The practice is good too! It’s when we practice that we develop our muscle memory that produces consistent skills that we apply when push comes to shove and we play the game.

And Christian education is like that too. I told the catechumens that if confirmation instruction is like practice, the coming to worship on Sunday morning is like playing the game.

Sunday morning is not (of course) the only time we play the game. Thinking here of our annual meeting and Annual Report....playing the game also happens when we teach SCS or share

in our various mission projects here and around the world that feed the hungry and quilt people who need quilts and support schools, institutions of mercy and pray for our brothers and sisters and represent our congregation in community service and are a good neighbor, etc.

Remember says the Apostle....this is a critical contest. ***We are not fighting against humans. We are fighting against forces and authorities and against rulers of darkness and powers in the spiritual world.*** The apostle reminds us that we cannot even see the enemy because the enemy has a spiritual dimension.... and by definition what is spiritual cannot be seen. But (the point is) we are on the floor / court / diamond depending on the resources God supplies to the best of our personal abilities. We and every Christian may think of themselves as in the game....

We have an annual meeting on the day this Mustard Seed is being delivered in our boxes. In a number of ways, the Annual Report tells us how we played the game. We have the chance to put something on the scoreboard. Thanks for all your effort! Only with Jesus we can know are we on the winning side.

God bless us all,     Pastor T.