

REFLECTIONS

March 8, 2009

“...and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

Matthew 28:20 NKJV

Unplanned Reunion

It was an unplanned reunion. I had not seen the young man for many years and the visit with him carried my mind to a season we shared long ago. I was a young father bringing my son to join a baseball team. The young man became one of his teammates. Circumstances drew me into a position I didn't intend and I became the coach of the T-ball team. I took the position reluctantly, but later found it to be a blessing in my life.

Two failures at coaching youth baseball told me that my talents were elsewhere. Yet there I was cast in the position again, only better prepared this time. This time it was about teaching the kids in a way they would learn, and making it fun. Practices were divided into ten minute segments. A small group would practice catching, another group would practice hitting, and still another was fielding groundballs and throwing to first base. Then the groups rotated. Everyone was busy and routines changed quickly.

Lineups were designed for everyone to play and the batting order intended for everyone to bat an equal number of times. Assistant coaches were encouraged to give only positive instruction—coaching players where to run or throw instead of what not to do. Winning wasn't most important. Having fun was. Parent meetings were held to explain the philosophy and most of them understood. We did have fun—the boys, the parents, the other coaches, and me. And the unexpected happened too. We did win.

I remember that season fondly. The autographed ball from the players is displayed among my cherished trophies. It was fun to see one of the players from that team again. He was only five years old then, and now a man with little ball players of his own. But here is the best part.

I found the young man with the love of Christ in his heart. He was on fire for the Lord, and he was serving Him with every breath. I left our unplanned reunion with a warm heart but knowing full well that I had no part in bringing Christ into his life. I had not invited Jesus to the practices. But I wish now that I had. Now I wonder about the others that played on that team. I wonder if any of them found Christ along the way. I wonder if any of their lives would be different if I had told them that Jesus loved them.

I wish I had invited Jesus to the practices and the games back then, but looking back now I know He was there anyway. Though I was not a vessel that revealed Christ to those boys, it was through those boys that I received a cherished blessing.

“You are the light of the world,”

Richard +

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