

## Devotional Blog – Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> July 2021

Even if you are not an ardent follower of football, I am sure that you were all aware that last Sunday England played in the final of a major football tournament for the first time in 55 years. There was no escape from the media hype. Excitement and expectation was at fever pitch, which was being stoked by the TV. Pundits who were all convinced that it was “coming home”.

The nation came to almost a complete stand-still for a football match. In England’s path to the prize was opposition, in the shape of the much-fancied Italians (I tipped them after the first round of matches). We all know how the evening unfolded. The emotions that replaced the ones of excitement and expectancy, were heartache and disappointment.

The expectation and excitement grew as the ultimate prize got closer. In some respects, it is better to go out in the earlier stages of a competition. Although there is still disappointment at being eliminated. This is the same whether it’s the Euros, Wimbledon or The Great British Bake Off, the nearer you get to the prize the greater the disappointment.

Away from the world of sport, I guess we have all faced times when we have had to deal with disappointment. It maybe that you weren’t successful in landing your dream job, or a house move that fell through. The dictionary definition reads: **“sadness or displeasure caused by the non-fulfilment of one’s hopes or expectations”**. How we deal with the emotion of disappointment can have a big impact on our lives.

Gareth Southgate, the England manager, has already stated that he is now looking forward to leading the team to the next World Cup, in Qatar, at the end of 2022. He is not dwelling on the disappointment of losing the final, but looking to re-appoint the players for the next task. In the words of author Audrey Farrell **“learn from the past, live in the present and plan for the future”**. This is a good motto for us all!!

God, Himself, is no stranger to disappointment. The scriptures are littered with stories of folks who let the creator of heaven and earth down. But despite this He restores them so they can serve Him again. Look at the story of Samson in Judges 13-16. Samson succumbed to the wiles of Delilah, but God still used him to slay the Philistines, although that was at the expense of his own life.

Jesus’ disciples let Him down on many occasions, none more so than Peter. In Matthew 26: 31-35 we read that Jesus predicts that Peter would disown Him three times before the cock crowed at dawn. Peter was adamant this was not going to happen. Like the football on Sunday we know the result!! Jesus had

previously stated in ***Matthew 16:18 I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock, I will build my church.to the next task***

Jesus must have felt great disappointment in Peter. But that was not the end, in fact it was the beginning. At the end of John's gospel, we read the account of Jesus re-appointing Him, with new instructions.

If you are anything like me you will have let God down in many and various ways. Do not despair, He is wanting to re-appoint you to a new and exciting task!!

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