

The Road to Emmaus...or the Final Four.
(Luke 24: 13-53)

Ahhhh, here we are. Spring has sprung. We've moved, as faithful Christians, through the winter of Lent and we have broken through to a glorious Eastertide. My friends from Kansas report that snow is predicted there on Saturday. On Saturday the kids and I will be headed toward warm water for a spell. They are gloating that they are better at college basketball and I'm gloating because it doesn't snow near warm water.

A dear cousin of mine from Kansas has posted a photo on her Facebook profile. It captured my attention this week. The photo pictures UNC Coach Roy Williams at the KU/Memphis NCAA basketball final game laughing amongst cheering KU fans with a little Jayhawk insignia tacked onto his black shirt. I've been cheering for the two teams that Roy Williams has coached for a good part of my life: KU and UNC. Last Saturday night, to the dismay of all, KU trounced UNC in the Final Four basketball semi-finals. Coach Williams has history on the prairie with KU. Despite a great disappointment of loss on Saturday night, there he was on Monday night "in the game" so to speak cheering for a good team that I'm sure he loves. That speaks to me of sportsmanship or churchmanship or grace in defeat or whatever you want to call it. I think my first tendency would be to go lick my wounds in a dark place for awhile, but now maybe it won't be. When tempted, I'll remember that photo of a grinning Roy Williams at what most certainly was a difficult game for him and for many. The game has been good to him. It's a game that can be fickle and unfair. A game where you are a hero one minute and the next minute you hear the roar of "what have you done for us lately?" It's a game that most certainly is merely a game.

We all play a game. It's called being human. We win some and we lose some, but you can be sure that there's always another game to be played. That's life lived on this earth. It's how we approach *the bench* that proves us. Yes, the bench is what I meant to say, not the court. All sorts of ego-driven motivations get us and keep us on the court, but it's how we approach the bench that proves us. And yes I mean "prove." Not in the sense of validating an argument, but more in the sense of determining quality by the testing.

Jesus of Nazareth played the human game. Jesus, our God Incarnate, became fully human and he got caught up in a fierce game. It was brutal. "What have you done for me lately" was a frequent refrain. He got knocked down a few times. Yet, Jesus proved himself on the bench, Jesus changed the rules. The risen Jesus Christ taught us that in losing the game, ultimately we win. Yes, it hurts. Yes, the wounds do not magically go away. ...and YES, love and compassion heals. Losers are the winners. YES, there comes a time when gathering in peace to feast with kindred friends becomes more way important

than the big game of last week. Gathering in peace with winners and losers is the POINT of the game.

Jesus Christ puts our human game into its proper perspective. Jesus does that, and so can we.

+peace,
Maria