

The Winning Team

Mark 3:14-19

First of all—Who is this? [Show picture of Stuart Pearce]

This week picked up a Newspaper and read this article. The article was about the team's first match with Brazil – they lost. Over the next week there will be much speculation as to the final eleven he will put out on the field for their first match and whether they can win anything!

It's interesting to note that when Pearce picked his team, he's picking from the best under 23s available to him. These guys are a mix of some of the best achieving young footballers mixed with three very experienced professionals. They are having to play in a country where people aren't too bothered about them and don't think we should even have an Olympic football competition.

They've got a lot to prove.

Pearce has had these guys for a few weeks and he'll be installing in the team tactics by which he wants them to play, viewing video's re: strengths and weaknesses of the opposition, working them on the practice field to stay fit and sharp.

Essentially, the players will be learning from the Pearce how he wants them to play.

This article reminds me a lot of Jesus. Not long after he entered into the public world, He picked a very special team.

Any guesses who that team might be? Disciples.

How many of them were there? 12

Yes, that's right. Let me read the list to you.

[READ Mark 3: 14—19]

14 He appointed twelve--designating them apostles--that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach 15 and to have authority to drive out demons. 16 These are the twelve he appointed: Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter); 17 James son of Zebedee and his brother John (to them he gave the name Boanerges, which means Sons of Thunder); 18 Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot 19 and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

Jesus was picking ordinary people. Stuart Pearce picked the best of the best. Jesus picked ordinary everyday people.

Simon Peter - Fisherman, son of John

Andrew - Fisherman, son of John and Peter's brother

James - Fisherman, son of Zebedee, son of Boanerges (thunder)

John - Fisherman, son of Zebedee, Boanerges (thunder), brother of James

Philip - From Bethsaida

Matthew - tax collector, son of Alphaeus

Nathaniel (Bartholomew) - from Cana, a "true Israelite"

Thomas

James, son of Alphaeus

Simon, the Zealot - Guerrilla fighter

Judas, son of James

Judas Iscariot – turned out to be a bit dodgy – and Jesus knew it.

To me, if I was wanting to pick a team that would overturn the world, and make an impact in this world, I'd want men and women who were army generals, politicians, wise businessmen, intelligent thinkers.

But Jesus wasn't so interested in that.
Do you know the key thing Jesus was looking for in getting members for His team?
Vs 14 *"....that they might be with Him"*

Jesus is simply looking for people that want to be with Him.
to learn from Him
to follow Him
to live by the things He taught
Just like the Football Manager taking the team away into training camp.

Isn't that encouraging.....
We don't have to be the best or the greatest or the most popular or the most wealthy to be a friend of Jesus.

We simply need to decide to follow him and he can take us and make us what he wants us to be.

We want to strive to be the very best we can in all that we do—sports, music, studies, job, etc. There's nothing wrong with that

But when it comes to knowing God, it is important to realize that Jesus loves us, he died for us that we can be accepted and chooses us simply as we are. All we have to do is accept Him, accept his offer of life, his invitation to follow him.

He took 12 men and made a massive impact on the world.

He can take our lives and make an impact in the world too. That may be just this neighbourhood, it may be our families, or our work. Following Jesus has resulted in people doing extraordinary things. And He wants to do it in your life.

Don't feel good enough? Jesus still loves us anyway and wants us to be in his team and if you've not accepted Jesus yet, then he makes that offer to you today.

Challenge & prayer.

*Preached by Mark Reid based on an idea from a booklet of ideas of things to do for the Olympics – origin unknown – sorry! MRBC
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