

Playing on God's Squad

Despite my stellar high school baseball career, not one college scout came recruiting. I don't know, maybe they weren't impressed with my 6'3 170lbs physique. Maybe they frowned on the idea of having to time a 40 yard dash with a calendar? Whatever the case, I was down in the dumps about it.

When my grandma found out she said, "I'll call coach Bellipani down at the Jr. College. He'll let you on the team."

Of course I didn't take her seriously. At least not until she came back with a scholarship offer. Thank goodness for grandmothers with Italian family pull!

Well, I didn't let her down. I pitched a no-hitter in my college baseball debut. I'll just let that sink in a minute, before I admit I never pitched us to another victory after that. In fact, we barely won that game. I think it'd be a fair assessment to say our team stunk.

After my initial outing I was pegged as the Ace. Unfortunately that meant I was given the privilege of pitching against all the teams that would most likely consider my 85 mph fastball batting practice. I could always count on Coach Bellipani though. He'd never give up on me. You could tell, by the way he'd leave me out there until my earned run average was running neck and neck with my pitch count.

I guess eventually those meaningless stats in that little game book, along with the jeers of the three football players we considered our home crowd, began taking a toll on me. My confidence was being slapped out of the park faster than my curveball, and I ceased being a warrior content to give his best for the team. In fact, I began saving my best pitches for a very different pastime; the blame game.

Soon my mouth was giving new meaning to the term 'bull pin', and it didn't bode well with the coach. Before the season was over the bat boy stood a better chance of taking the mound than me. It would've taken a bunker busting bomb to dig me out of that dug out. Looking back, I really wish I would have made better decisions. The Ace had become the King of Excuses, and ended up playing the Joker.

But anyway- Excuses are a dime a dozen in today's society. I can only imagine some of them God will hear on judgment day. People will be gathered around God's Great White Throne of judgment claiming, "I thought all roads led to God?"

Others pleading ignorance. "But my text books said I came from pond scum that crawled out and grew legs before turning into a monkey!" (Does that sound as ridiculous to you as it does to me?)

Many will probably be prepared to list their good works, but I'm sure when they encounter God's glory and holiness, they'll simply bow and confess like everyone else, "JESUS IS LORD." Sadly, by then it will be too late. There'll be no excuse for having rejected the One True God- the God of the Bible, and His plan of salvation offered in this life through His Son Jesus. *(But God shows his anger from heaven against all sinful, wicked people who push the truth away from themselves. For the truth about God is known to them instinctively. God has put this knowledge in their hearts. From the time the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky and all that God made. They can clearly see his invisible qualities--his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse whatsoever for not knowing God. Romans 1:18-20 NLT)*

Well, there's good news. I've come recruiting today, on behalf of a Coach who wants you to know He hasn't given up on you. He still carries a clean white jersey in His bag with your name on it. He is waiting for the day you'll dress out and swing for the heavens. So shed those excuses, repent and receive Jesus as your Lord, and be a part of God's squad?

- Guy Sheffield 9-28-06