

## **Be a Berean!**

*The Bereans...received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day.* (Acts 17:11)

["Be a Berean" will regularly cover topics that arise during Lockport Alliance Bible classes. Contact Franklyn Pfeil—[liftedup@lockportalliance.org](mailto:liftedup@lockportalliance.org)—with questions or comments.]

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### **"We're winnin', Dad!"**

Frankie is 14 now, in the eighth grade. I can't lift him anymore without great effort, so I carry him in my heart, as Dads do. I can't run with him anymore either. He worked hard all season long, trying to break 6-minutes for the mile. So when he ran 5:59.97 a few weeks ago at the final meet of the junior high track season, it was a shining moment.

I try to teach the boys the fine art of the scam, in order that they won't be fooled when someone tries to pull the wool. So on the way home from the meet (as Shelley shook her head in dismay) I told him, "If someone asks you what you can run for the mile, just say '5-something.' It's not a lie, and it sounds good." A few days later, some of his friends came over to play paintball--a game where they all run around like the wild boys of Borneo, shooting and splattering each other until the moon rises. During a truce, called in order to re-load their ammo, while Shelley and I were working on her garden, one of the boys asked Frankie what he ran for the mile this season. The moment of decision was upon him. He looked to his flim-flamming Dad, then he looked to his gracious Mom. "I got a 5:59.97."

"Kids these days," I muttered, pulling out another weed. "What's gonna become of a kid who won't apply a little varnish?"

There was a day when I was younger and he was little. He might have been five years old then, when we entered him in his first race. It was the "Mr. Ed's 1-mile Fun Run" in Middleport. Most of the runners were kids, along with some Moms and Dads. But none of them were as little as Frankie. He got right up on the starting line and crouched over like a sprinter about to come out of the starting blocks. It was Super Bowl Sunday, late in January, so he wore mittens and a hat. Taking it all in, he saw that most of the kids wore no gloves, so he took his off and handed them to me. Then the starter fired his pistol and the race had begun. Immediately, we were engulfed by the crowd of runners. In a minute, we were behind almost all. But Frankie never looked around at any of them as they passed us. His eyes were straight ahead of him the entire race, as he strained with purpose and effort.

It took a long time to run that mile. I ran three steps directly behind. He garnered a lot of notice along the way because of his size and determination. It was an out-and-back course; the runners turned at the midpoint and headed back towards us. As they approached, each of them offered words of encouragement. Some proffered a hand, thinking Frankie would reciprocate with a 'high-five,' but he never even noticed. His eyes were on the prize.

After the turnaround, we ran into the wind. Now it was cold. "Do you want your mittens, Frankie?" A slight, nearly imperceptible flick of his head meant 'No.'

Everyone was ahead of us now. I went a step in front of Frankie and a step to the side to shield him from the wind. When a particularly sharp gust turned my head his way, Frankie looked up to offer me some encouragement: "We're winnin', Dad," he called out, as he flipped that easy smile.

A couple years later, I found out about Jesus Christ and how he--a man after his Father's heart--*set his face like flint* (1) to carry my sin up a steep hill just outside the walls of Jerusalem. There, suspended between heaven and earth, he was a man with no direction home--rejected by his own here on earth; unfit for heaven when he *became sin for us* (2). For a moment he could not see his Father, because this was a course He had to finish alone. Then, with His last breath, he cried out "*Teleo!*" *And he bowed his head and gave up his spirit* (3).

Before I knew Him, '*Teleo*' meant '*It is finished*'--it's over. My natural eyes saw a forlorn figure, forsaken by man and God, defeated by empire and religion and spite.

But the day came when my new, *blood-tipped ear* (4) heard, in that word, the most astonishing faith and bravery that eternity would ever know, when *the Lion of the tribe of Judah* (5) fought to the death for the life of his brothers. Now I read '*Teleo*' as--"We did it! The debt is discharged (6), paid in full. We won, Dad!"

Some day, in a dark hour, when it makes no earthly sense to say so, make this your prayer:

Looking straight up to the One you can't see, tell Him, "We're winnin', Dad."

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Scripture cited: (1) Isaiah 50:7; (2) 2 Corinthians 5:21; (3) John 19:30; (4) see Exodus 29:20; (5) Revelation 5:5; (6) see Colossians 2:13-15

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It is our fervent hope that you will 'be a Berean' by attending one of these Bible-based classes this week! —

"Major Bible Themes"--Sunday at 9:45

"Jesus, the One and Only"--Sunday at 9:45

"Speak God's Word"--Sunday at 9:45