

Hi Mountain

Well, if you are eager to get your digs in about the Vikings, I'm ready. Bring it. Or some of you softies will be prone to console and comfort, and in a reversal of roles will say to your pastor words I might say to you at life's various low points: "I'm sorry for your loss." Either way, it is what it is, because the Vikings managed to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory on Sunday. They discovered they could beat the New Orleans Saints pretty easily; it was the Vikings they lost to. Now that the dust has settled and the tears have dried in our house (yes, there were some tears), I find myself waxing philosophical about it all. Here are some preliminary thoughts:

- **Better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all.** It's true. Some say it would have been easier not to get your hopes up if all it meant was having them dashed in the end. Ravens fans get that. Sort of like a jilted lover who swears off all relationships. But wait a second. Life without relationships? No way. And for me, it's better to enjoy a good season, and all the great moments along the way, even if we come up short. Sports analysts will say dumb things about how terrible it is not winning the Big One. But we don't watch just for that. And in life, I don't want miss the journey in life because I'm afraid it might not end up where I expect. The joy is in the journey.
- **People will let you down.** Even Brett Favre. Vikings fans had pinned messianic hopes on his shoulders. But in the end his feet were made of clay. Despite how we tried to tape up those feet, he still couldn't run on them and threw an interception instead. There's a serious lesson in there someplace. Nobody's perfect. Except Jesus. Sometimes we are so hurt in life by the failures of people, we are hesitant to trust in God. But it's true: Jesus NEVER FAILS. Wow. Get the ball in HIS hands when it matters.
- **It's only a game.** Seriously, folks. (I know this is a defense mechanism to shield me from the pain, but it's also a true statement). There's something to be said for perspective. I read an article this week about Tony Dungy, former head coach of the Colts, and winner of the Super Bowl as both player and coach (and University of Minnesota standout back in the day!). He's emerged as one of the most respected Christian leaders in the country. But even though he still does NFL analysis and commentary, everyone knows his life is about so much more than football these days. As he tries to instill character and a moral compass in athletes and young men, his message is "There's more to life than a super bowl ring." ([read this article - http://sports.espn.go.com/espn/eticket/story?page=100128/TonyDungy](http://sports.espn.go.com/espn/eticket/story?page=100128/TonyDungy))
- In a world where families are still picking through rubble to locate the bodies of their loved ones, and where the combined salaries of football players exceed the GNP of developing countries where children go to bed hungry...in a world where Leukemia invades little bodies, and 2/3 of the planet's 6 Billion souls don't have eternal hope in Christ - can we really pretend it's a big deal that our team didn't win?

Let's come together Sunday for what always draws us. Jesus. We'll move forward in our series "What's the World Coming To?" The message is from Revelation chapters 2 and 3 and is about being 100% sold out and **on fire** for Christ. Jesus says one proof of your commitment to Him will be whether and how you serve Him. Are you in the game? In preparation for this weekend, how about you do a little self-assessment:

Are you serving in ministry with passion?

Can you name for me where and with whom you are serving?

Are you devoting time to the Lord's work that matches the sacrifice Jesus has made for you?

Serving is what disciples do. This week we are not just going to talk about being on fire for God, **God is going to call us to action**. As you leave services there will be tables set up in the Commons of both venues so everyone can "fire-up" their commitment to serve. Here's the situation. We are about to launch the most significant endeavor of this church has tackled in some time. The new campus is coming in March. What we have is a tremendous Ministry need here at Mountain being created by those who are going to the new campus in Bel Air. **Everyone who attends Mountain is going to be needed to step up in the coming months at the Mountain Road campus**. This is your time! Let me give you a heads up so you can be talking, thinking, and praying about it. **We need volunteers in these areas:**

- Children's Ministry
- Welcome Ministry
- Worship Arts
- Student Ministries

There are different kinds of roles for different kinds of folks. We'll have leaders from each of those areas you can talk to after services this Sunday - to answer questions and give info. They will be looking for on fire servants who will say, "here I am - where do you need me." I hope you will stop by the table and say that.

See you Sunday - with my game face on,

Ben