

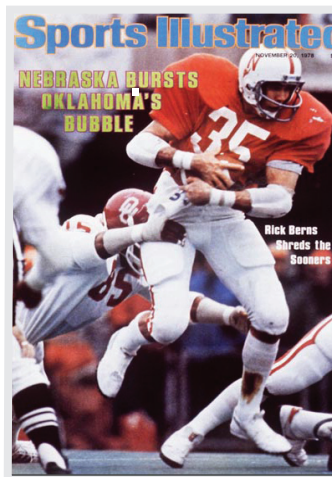
Suffering

Lessons from Husker football and history

Husker fans were reminded last week by Randy York's article "Thirty Years Later, 35-31 Loss Still Burns, Berns" that history repeats itself. It has been 30 years since the Husker Nation felt the sting of a home loss to Missouri until this past week.

I remember the loss well because I played on that team. We had just beaten Oklahoma for the first time under Tom Osborne the prior week. As we prepared for the Missouri game, the emotion of beating OU and the excitement of playing for the National Championship seemed like a sure thing. I remember thinking during the week of practice that many of my teammates seemed very prideful and overly confident as we prepared to play Missouri. We were heavily favored and they were the only obstacle between us and playing for the National Champions in 1978.

My former teammate, Rick Berns, who appeared on the cover of "Sports Illustrated" the week before because of his outstanding game, recently talked with Randy York about the loss to Missouri, "Unfortunately, the loss changed our senior class's place in Nebraska football history. In a matter of seven days, we went from being Coach Osborne's first team to beat Oklahoma and having a chance to play on collegiate football's big dance floor for a national title to just another one of Nebraska's conference championship teams."



I'm guessing this year's Husker team would gladly accept a conference championship after last week's pounding by Missouri. Besides losing for the first time in 30 years to Missouri at home, it was also the worst loss at home for a half-century. While many fans surely suffered following the blow out that emotion pales when compared to how the players and coaches felt after the game.

Only hours before the football game, I attended a Bible Conference taught by Don Carson on "Suffering." It's too bad that the entire Husker Nation couldn't have heard his excellent messages (they are available as free downloads at www.omahabiblechurch.org).

As I waited in the press room to interview one of the Husker players, I glanced down at my notes from the conference. Carson's fourth point of the day was "Insights from the Mystery of God's Providence." He reminded us that God is in control of all our circumstances and that nothing takes Him by surprise. In other words, the Lord is never outplayed or out coached. I was reminded of a Bible verse I memorized after the loss to Missouri 30 years ago, "And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28).

WARMUP

1. Watch the internet video with Ron Brown.
Go to www.youtube.com and search for "10-4-08 Nebraska Coach Ron Brown"

WORKOUT

1. After the Missouri loss, Ron Brown said, "We need to thank the Lord for this game even though we were badly beaten." Read 1 Thessalonians 5:18: "Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God Christ Jesus for you." What can you learn from what Ron said after the game?
2. How might James 4:6 apply to this past week's loss? How about your own season so far? "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble." James 4:6 (ESV)
3. How can you apply James 1:2-4 to your sport?
4. If God is in control of everything, why should you pray? Go to www.youtube.com and search for "Don Carson - What Is Biblical Prayer And Why Should I Pray If God Know's Everything?"

WRAPUP

This week, memorize... "Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing." James 1:2-4 (ESV)

PRAYER

Lord, help me not be proud of my accomplishments or the ways you have blessed me...

GOSPEL FOCUS

This gospel is properly disclosed in personal, self-humiliation. When the gospel is received, there is no pride, but a sense of one's own worthlessness. ("By the grace of God, I am what I am...") Humility, gratitude, dependence are the attitudes of the truly converted. - Don Carson.

Don Carson from a message at www.theresurgence.com.

Search: What is the Gospel?

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