

Pastor Brian's  
Mid Week Message  
November 3, 2021

**“COMPETITION”**

*“I understand about indecision, but I don't care if I get behind. People livin' in competition. all I want is to have my peace of mind.”* (Boston, “Peace of Mind”, 1976)

I'm a little nervous right now. Most of you are aware that Kay and I regularly play tennis, about 3 times each week. It's fun, good exercise, we love the people we play with, and there's a bit of friendly competition. We play to win, but at the end of the day nobody really cares all that much about the outcome. Tomorrow the heat is going to be turned up a bit. Now that I have a sound left knee (Thanks Dr. Dingle and the Kennedy White Orthopedics team) I worked up the never to join one of our club's Suncoast League tennis teams. I'm on the 60-3 team. The 60 is for 60 years and older, and the 3 is the level of play, with 1 being the best players. As in the 60's league there are only 3 levels, I think you can figure out where I stand in terms of ability. Nevertheless, I draw a certain amount of angst from the situation. As if I don't play well, and there's always a significant chance that it will happen, I'll be letting down my partner and the rest of my teammates. I really don't want to do that. Considering this, you might ask, “well why do it?” That's a good question, one that I have asked of myself. Number one is because I was asked. They needed players. Number two, I like the other guys on the team. (I pray that the feeling's mutual). And number three, this will give me the opportunity to meet players from other clubs and get to know them. We will also be playing some of our matches “on the road”, so I'll get to see and play on other courts. Back when I was younger competition seemed much more appealing. I was involved in sports competitions, musical, academic and I had to compete with three older brothers at the dinner table to make sure that I got my daily allotment. A visual inspection of me reveals that I was by and large successful. In my previous career, local television news, competition was the be all and end all of everything. Every day was a competition for ratings, to draw the most eyeballs to our newscasts over our competitors. If we could do that our station would be able to charge more for advertising time and bring in more revenue, more profits. If we failed, changes were sure to come and that usually meant that the faces that you see reporting the news, weather (my bailiwick) and sports would soon be different. I'm sure glad that I am no longer in that business! I put the quotation above in because it's one that I'm very familiar with. It's from the rock group Boston, and in particular a song that was released in 1976 titled “Peace of Mind”. My familiarity comes from the fact that I went off to college in the fall of 1976, and the guys who lived next door to me in the dorm played this song over, and over, and over, and over again. Sometimes at 2:00 in the afternoon, and sometimes at 2:00 in the morning. More and more, as I age the competition seems less desirable and *“all I want is to have my peace of mind”*. My current career path gives me a whole lot more of that than the former. In this life there will always be some sort of competition but being connected to Christ it can be dealt with from a position of peace. Jesus clearly states, *“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”* (John 14:27) And, *“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”* (John 16:33) Peace of mind comes from the sure knowledge that Jesus my Savior has won the victory over sin, death, and the power of the devil, and that He has given to me the spoils of that victory. I can face all things with confidence, calmness, boldness, courage, and hope knowing that nothing can separate me from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus my Lord. The same goes for you too. We have the assurance of eternal life and salvation, and a bodily resurrection to be with God in His heaven forever, enjoying the perfection, glory, peace, joy, and rest that we can never begin to imagine in this life, because you won't find it in this life. Not in its heavenly fullness. Sure, we get tastes of glory, especially when we come out on top in a competition, but those moments are fleeting. In heaven they will never fade, and they will be the result of the ultimate competition that has already been won for us by Jesus in the cross and empty tomb. From this moment on and for the rest of our earthly life we can approach any and all competition from a position of already having won the victory in Christ. I sure hope that Jesus has a good backhand and serve!