



One Page Sermon

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Jesus the Way and the paths of Ray, Terrance, and Moonlight Graham

Last week was a historic week in Iowa. In the town of Dyersville, population 4,000, the White Sox and Yankees played the first official game of any major professional sports league in the state of Iowa. Known as the “Field of Dreams Game,” it became the highest rated regular season baseball game in over 15 years.

The game itself did not disappoint, and there are already plans to have another Field of Dreams game next year between the Cubs and the Reds. People who remember the film “Field of Dreams,” wanted to see the game in this unique venue.

I’ve been to the Field of Dreams twice in my life. Both times I played some catch with my Dad. The movie holds a special place in my heart. I written about it, preached about it, and seen it dozens of times. It is no surprise to me that the movie has been popular, and that the impulse to reconnect to the movie is strong. And while many consider this to be a great baseball movie, the reason it has remained so powerful is that it is really not about baseball. It is about reconciling relationships and finding our path.

The protagonist, Ray Kinsella is on a journey. A voice (was it the Holy Spirit, his own conscience, the memory of his father, or something else?) leads him on a path of risk-taking, vulnerability, and self discovery. Along the way he encounters another man who is on his own journey. Terrence Mann feels as if his journey of “making a difference” is over. After years of writing and activism, he feels burned out. His path has ended as a recluse in Boston, resistant to any outside relationships, invulnerable to the suffering of others.

Terrance and Ray finally encounter Moonlight Graham, a former ballplayer and now a retired doctor in a small town in Minnesota. His path had taken him inches from his dreams of making it as a Big Leaguer, but then took him on a journey of healing and caring for others. Through the magic of the baseball field in the corn, Moonlight Graham is given another chance at his dream, and ultimately another choice—baseball or helping others.



Field of Dreams is about three men forging a path. Ray’s path is one of reconciliation with his father. Terrance’s path is one that leads out of the bitterness and cynicism and toward a renewed calling and discovery of joy. Moonlight Graham’s path is a simple reassurance that the path he chose was the right one all the time.

Reconciliation, vulnerability, and service. These are the paths

forged by the Field of Dreams in Ray, Terrance, and Moonlight. All three find a renewed sense of purpose and mission. It is no wonder the Field of Dreams has stood the test of 30 years time.

It is no wonder that in this time of desperation, pain, polarization, and uncertainty, memories of the Field of Dreams are still so powerful. We live in an exhausting time. Christian flags fly next to Nazi flags at protests. School board members are threatened by parents who think masks are instruments of death. Misinformation spreads faster than the Delta variant and thousands suffer needlessly. A movie providing a path of reconciliation, vulnerability, and service can be a balm for our sick, exhausted souls.

As Jesus gathered with his disciples for the last time, he knew that the coming days would be hard for them. They would be exhausted and fearful, so he reminded them that the path they were on was the right one. He was going to be gone—but only to prepare a place for them. They would be left on earth with a similar path. One that led through reconciliation, vulnerability, and service.

Thomas asked, “Lord, we don’t know where you are going. How can we know the way?” It was a good question. I can identify with this question. In these troubled times it is hard to see the path, let alone the destination.

Jesus replied, “I am the way, the truth, and the life.” It is easy to question our path. It is easy to worry over the way that we are going, but like Ray, Terrance, and Moonlight, we can discover the paths of reconciliation, vulnerability, and service. We don’t need a baseball field in Iowa to show us this path. We already know Jesus, who is the way, the truth, and the life.