



Newsletter

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- Up Words # 14

A BAD BET



The Mega Millions lottery hit an impressive all-time record 656 million jackpot on Friday, March 30th and it certainly did receive a lot of hype and media attention. Even more amazing than the payout was the chances of winning it. The odds were something like 1:176,000,000. One illustration I heard of those odds was that of putting together the area of twenty football fields and throwing a ball that would land in a one inch square. Another illustration was that you would be more likely to be hit by lightening ten times and surviving each time! Yet, people took a shot at winning with hopes of somehow hitting it big. In fact, people spent over 1.5 billion dollars for a chance to win. Incredibly there were three of the millions who played that actually got it right, but for the millions who lost it was a bad bet.

This gambling frenzy made me think of some gamblers surrounding Christ's crucifixion. I think of Judas who decided to betray Jesus for thirty pieces of silver (See Matthew 26:14-16). He bet that siding with the Romans was better than staying with the disciples. He gambled and lost. In fact his bet ended with suicide when he realized he had betrayed innocent blood. (Matthew 27:3-4). Then there were the soldiers at the cross. Mark 15:24 indicates that "they crucified Him, and divided up His garments among themselves, casting lots for them to decide what each man should take." Christ's crucifiers gambled over His garments! The betrayer Judas and the crucifying soldiers were betting that money and material possessions would make them happy. They didn't! It was really a bad bet!

As bad a bet as those lottery tickets and material possessions may be, there is a worse bet than these. Unfortunately many people are gambling with their eternal destination. They are betting that their good deeds will outnumber their bad ones and that God will one day welcome them into heaven. No one knows for sure how much good God requires and none can really keep good track of good and bad deeds, but almost everyone is certain that in the end they will "win." In reality, they won't. Jesus Himself said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me." (John 14:6). Jesus did not say He was "a" way; He said He is "the" way ... the only way. Nor did He say that some might get to the Father in some other way; He said no one, not one, comes to the Father without Him. If you or your loved ones are betting on getting to heaven without repentance from sin and personal confession of Jesus Christ as your Savior, you are not headed to heaven. There is a 0% chance, a one in never possibility of getting there without calling on Christ for salvation.

Far more important than your earthly goods is your eternal soul. How do you plan to get to heaven? Don't gamble with a bad bet!

Looking Up!

Pastor Chuck Circle