

18 seconds vs eternity

"and let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart." gal 6:9

and now, a true story from 2016.

in an incredible act of sportsmanship and brotherly love, two-time Olympic champion alistair brownlee gave up a shot of winning the World triathlon series grand final to help his heat-exhausted younger brother across the finish line.

two-time olympic medalist jonny brownlee appeared to be in serious trouble while leading in the final kilometer, after 1 hour, 45 minutes of racing in cozumel. legs wobbled. arms flailed. finally, jonny grimaced and his eyes veered left. he slowed to a stop and had to be held up by somebody on the side of the run course.

behind him, alistair and south african henri schoeman had been battling for second place. they came up to pass a stopped jonny for the lead.

that's when alistair chose his brother over a possible victory, stopping and wrapping jonny's right arm around his own neck. alistair could tell just how dire the situation was.

"it's as close to death as you're going to be in sport," he said later of jonny.

alistair helped jonny the rest of the way, about 80

seconds of jogging together. alistair pushed jonny across the finish line in front of himself for second place, as jonny was in contention for the season-long world title and alistair was not. they were 18 seconds behind schoeman.

this was an exemplary act of sacrifice by man in his sinful state. could we, as ambassadors of the most high God, show the same to our brothers and sisters in Christ?

we are all in a race as well, competing for the prize to be sure. but... "the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, nor bread to the wise, nor riches to men of understanding, nor favor to men of skill; but time and chance happen to them all. for man also does not know his time: like fish taken in a cruel net, like birds caught in a snare, so the sons of men are snared in an evil time, when it falls suddenly upon them." eccl 9:11-12

none of us know what awaits us around the next bend in life and the help we may need.

sometimes we come to life's crossroads
we view what we think is the end;
but God has a much wider vision
and He knows that it's only a bend.

the road will go on and get smoother
and after we've stopped for a rest,
the path that lies hidden beyond us

is often the path that is best.

so rest and relax and grow stronger
let go, and let God share your load,
and have faith in a brighter tomorrow
you've just come to a bend in the road.

-- helen steiner rice

will you be willing to stop for the one; the weary one?
they may be as close to death as they're going to be in
the race of eternal life; hanging on by a slender
thread. let us push them across the finish line; even
in front of us. our God will decide the rank and
order; the prizes and the crowns!