

True victory in Christ is always win-win. The false victories of the human world always create losers.



See the entire YouTube video (37 seconds) titled Special Olympic Race at: <https://youtu.be/v1qtv7uKUIY?si=YfsviTczucG6a1EL>

One of the racers falls down (#7). The girl next to him helps him up. Before you know it, all the racers are helping him, arm in arm, across the finish line together. In general, the Special Olympics have the Spirit of everyone winning.

On Easter Sunday, I told the story of an eight year-old Down Syndrome boy, Philip, who finally became a winner in the eyes of his Sunday School class. The class went into the church yard to find symbols of life, placing them in plastic eggs. The children assumed Philip had done it wrong when his egg was empty. Until he said, “The tomb is empty. I did it right. The tomb is empty.”

On Easter, we also talked about how our society as a whole has changed its view of differently abled people — and our politics concerning them! We’ve gone from sacrificing most of them in institutions to “mainstream” care. Here’s *the question for today*: when we have a politics of caring for the vulnerable, can we finally learn that God has created a win-win world in which no one has to be sacrificed?

Acts 10 was the First Reading on Easter Sunday. Peter gives a sermon at the home of Cornelius, a Roman army commander. Peter himself has an Aha-moment, ‘I finally get it! God shows no partiality.’ Today we read from Acts 10 again, where after his sermon the apostles baptize Cornelius’ entire household. Through water, these Gentile ‘outsiders’ are made children together in God’s household.

In today’s Second Reading, the Greek word for “win,” *nikē*, is prominent. Here’s what we need to take away from all this talk about winning the world: The Letter of John follows-up with the Gospel of John to make sure we understand the new rules of the game when God’s politics come into the world, grounded in the power of love, not military victory. In Jesus the Messiah and our *faith* in him, God’s win-win politics enter into the world of our win-lose politics.

The bottom line is that we come to have faith in a very different kind of leader, a Good Shepherd. **The authoritarian leaders** of this world operate with win-lose politics where some people, usually the most vulnerable, become losers. They are “sacrificed” for the good of those in charge. They sell us on the doctrine of scarcity, that there’s not enough for everyone, so there must be winners and losers. On Good Shepherd Sunday, we heard that those strong man leaders of human history are little more than thieves or hired hands.

But we place our faith in **the Good Shepherd** who, in love, lays down his life for the sheep. He turns their bloody sacrifice of others into the self-sacrifice of his own blood. He lets himself appear a loser on the cross when he has actually come to show us the victory of Easter, the victory of abundant life. He has come to lead us into a win-win politics that has faith in abundance, not scarcity. There is enough for everyone. It’s God’s new win-win politics come into the world.

Where do we see the evidence of such a new politics having come into the world? In the way we help differently abled people to achieve their best, helping them to flourish as much as possible — and us with them!

Do we see win-win politics in the dismantling of racism? In democratic politics, where frequent elections create win-win compromise? Closing reflections on *The Sum of Us: What Racism Costs Everyone and How We Can Prosper Together*, by Heather McGhee.

