



The New Church Newsletter

Hurstville Society November 2024

When 50-6 Is Really 0-6

By Rev Todd Beiswenger

Maybe you've heard, but Mike Tyson is back in the news again. Why? Because at 58 years old he's going to be stepping into the ring again in a couple weeks, and it's newsworthy because his opponent is a 31 year old who is an up and coming fighter that became famous for his YouTube channel. It's an odd mash up of a former heavyweight champ versus an inexperienced fighter that is half the former champ's age.

Personally I find Mike Tyson's life really interesting. He grew up in a broken home, and while his mother tried to support the kids, the reality was they were poor. Very poor. So Tyson got into all sorts of trouble, but most of it

around stealing and of course, fighting. This got him put into juvenile detention, and while there he finds that there is a boxing program.

As it is that he already thinks he's tough stuff, and he was a big guy for his age, he took on one of the other inmates there in a supervised boxing match. The result was that Tyson lost, badly. The other guy was well trained, and Tyson, not at all. But to his credit, he wanted to learn, and learn he did. It wasn't a path that he travelled without any difficulties or setbacks, but over the next few years he learned patience and perseverance as he trained to be the youngest heavy-weight champion ever.

The plan worked. He turned 18, and demolished his opponents for two years before getting a shot at the title in 1986. He knocked out the defending champ in the first round, and held the title for 4 years, which in the boxing world is a really long time! After losing the title in 1990, his life started falling apart. After the defeat a case was brought against him for rape. He was convicted, and spent three years in prison from 1992-1995.

After his release he started working to regain the title, which he did. This time however, he did not hold onto it for four years. He held it from March to November of 1996, losing in an upset to Evander Holyfield. His career record at this point was 45 wins, 2 losses. Over the next several years he tried to win the title back, and he was winning fights that gave him another title shot, but losing the title fight each time. His career ended with 50 wins and 6 losses.

People today debate where Tyson ranks among the all-time greats. 50 wins and 6 losses is an incredible career! Not many have ever lost the title and regained it as he did. But the reason I'm writing this article is because of the comments made by one man: Teddy Atlas.

You probably have never heard of Teddy Atlas, unless you're a bigger boxing fan than I'm imagining. But Teddy Atlas is a boxing trainer, one who is really good at his job as he's trained several big-name fighters. One of those

fighters he trained was a young Mike Tyson, so he knows Tyson well. When asked in an interview about how “great” Tyson was, Atlas responds, “I don’t know if he was ever great.” Yet, he goes on to say, “I know he was sensational. I know he was the greatest mix of maybe speed and power ever. I know he was one of the greatest punchers from either side of the plate, left or right.”

I don’t know about you, but that sounds “great” to me. But Atlas went on to say that while Tyson had a lot of ability, to him, “greatness” is more than talent. To further his viewpoint on the matter, Atlas cited Tyson’s upset loss to Buster Douglas in 1990, and a pair of upset defeats to Evander Holyfield in 1996 and 1997.

“A fight is not a fight until there’s something to overcome,” Atlas said. “Until then, it’s just an athletic exhibition contest. Yeah, who’s a better athlete? Who’s got more quick twitch fibers? Who’s more developed in those physical areas?”

“But a fight is not a fight until there’s something to overcome. So, if you go by my definition, not Webster’s, pretend it means something, Mike Tyson was only in five, six fights in his life. The fights where there was something to overcome, he didn’t overcome it.” So despite the 50-6 record, Atlas sees Tyson’s true record at 0-6 because those six fights were the only fights of his career where there was something to overcome.

Is Teddy Atlas right? Is “greatness” less about talent and more about a person’s ability to overcome? I’ve been thinking about this a lot. A few things come to mind, the first of which are the seven churches of Revelation. The letter written to Pergamos says, “To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it.” Who does God value? The church with talent? No. The church that overcomes.

Thyatira is told something similar. They're told to "hold fast what you have till I come. And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations... as I also have received from My Father; and I will give him the morning star." Laodicea is another church told to overcome, and in fact, if you go through the book of Revelation there are five other places where we're told that the person who overcomes will receive some reward. So "overcoming" is certainly important.

But what about talent? How does God regard our talent? We talk regularly about our hereditary evils, but the fact is we do have hereditary good, which I regard as a "natural talent" for good, as well. Some people do start out with a better disposition than others. You might equate it to one person being just naturally more athletic than another. So what about a person who dies as a child, and ends up in the highest heaven as a result of not corrupting himself through a life in this world? Are they really "better?" Are they "greater" than lower angels, or have they just had less to overcome?

Here's a specific example of this:

There was one, the son of a king, who died in childhood and grew up in heaven, who held this opinion. Therefore he was let down into that life of evils into which he was born, and he then perceived from the sphere of his life that he had a disposition to domineer over others, and regarded adulteries as of no account; these evils he had inherited from his parents; but after he had been brought to recognize his real character he was again received among the angels with whom he had before been associated. (HH 342)

We're told that this isn't an isolated incident just for the children of royalty, but rather in reading the whole passage it seems like all children raised in heaven at some point or another are let down into their lower self to see their inherited evils. When I think of these people as highest angels, I start to see Atlas' point, because these angels may have a great ability, but what

have they had to overcome? Or perhaps they've had similar things to overcome, but how hard is it for them to overcome them while being raised in heaven by the highest angels?

The Writings say that children raised in heaven “are content with the few and paltry things presented to them, and find delight in them; they have no solicitude about food and clothing, and none about the future; they do not look to the world and covet many things from it; they love their parents and nurses and their child companions with whom they play in innocence; they suffer themselves to be led; they give heed and obey” (HH 277). All of that to me isn't a description of people who have had to dig deep to overcome their natural tendencies. Being good wasn't hard for them.

In the Gospels, Jesus actually tells us who is the greatest of men. It's John the Baptist. When I think of his life, I think of a man who wasn't necessarily the most talented, but of a man who had to overcome. Similarly, Jesus never told us of His amazing talent and abilities(though He did put them on display), but He did say “I have overcome the world.”

So maybe Atlas is right: true greatness isn't a matter of talent, but of one's ability to overcome. It seems to align with what the Word teaches. I think it's a useful perspective to hold on to as well. It's easy to get down on ourselves for our failings, shortcomings and lack of talent, especially as we see others excelling. But when those demons tell us how untalented we are, it is probably a good approach to say back, “Yes, I may not be the most talented at [XYZ], but I am an overcomer, and I'm going to overcome you too.”

And with that, you'll be great in the eyes of Teddy Atlas... and believe it or not, the Lord too.

Want to Keep Getting My Articles?

I've heard from a few people that they would like to keep getting my articles after I've moved to Canada. If you would too, let me know (todd@hurstvillenewchurch.com) and once I get there I will add your name to the Olivet New Church newsletter mailing list. Their newsletter is called "The Chatterbox," so you'd get a monthly email titled, "Olivet Chatterbox."

Beiswengers Farewell Party

Come join us after church service on December 1st for a farewell to the Beiswengers. We are still organizing the details, but if you are interested in helping or attending, please contact Lori at: loriheldon@optusnet.com.au

HyunJin to South Korea

We are all well aware that HyunJin has been here on a visitor's visa, which is only good for three months. Well, his three months are nearly up, and so he's going to head back to Korea for a bit. He'll leave on November 4th, and return on the 15th. Beyond needing to reset his visa, he also would like to see his wife again! I think we can all understand that. It's also important to keep in mind that while we are hoping his work visa will come through sooner than later, the reality is that even once it is approved, YoungHee still may not be able to come to Sydney right away as they're still dealing with winding down things there. I mention this because once HyunJin returns on the 15th, it isn't clear when she'll be able to come, and therefore it is good for them to have time together before I depart.

An interesting turn-out of his itinerary is that Bishop David Lindrooth and Bishop Brad Heinrichs will pay their episcopal visit to Seoul, South Korea, from the 6th through 11th for their regional meeting there, and that HyunJin has been invited to join them for discussions and some translation assistance. So, he will find some use during the visit!

Introducing Brian O'Neill: A Lifeline for Mental Wellbeing

We are pleased to introduce Brian O'Neill, a highly experienced and compassionate psychologist, and an ordained minister of the New Church in Australia. Brian is committed to providing accessible mental health support and is offering Telehealth consultations under Medicare, ensuring no out-of-pocket costs for patients.

Brian brings over 30 years of experience in the mental health field, with a proven track record in diverse areas including:

- Mental Health (Senior Fellow in Mental Health, University of Wollongong)
- Dependence Issues (Director of Drug, Alcohol, and HIV/AIDS)
- Working with Veterans (Clinical Director Veterans Affairs, SA)
- Adolescent and Family Issues (Chair of Queensland Youth Early Psychosis Project)
- Workplace Issues (Workcover)
- Relationships including reconciliation, separation, and parenting (Senior Manager Relationship Australia, NSW)

Brian's extensive expertise and genuine desire to help make him an invaluable resource for anyone seeking guidance and support. If you or someone you know is struggling with mental health concerns, we encourage you to reach out to Brian. He is here to listen, understand, and provide the professional care you need.

To schedule a Telehealth appointment with Brian, *please obtain a referral from your GP*, and then contact him directly:

- **Phone:** 0478686701
- **Email:** oneillpsychology@gmail.com

Birthdays

Happy Birthday to Cliff Adamou (2nd), Jesse Horner (3rd), Brian Heldon (8th), Cathy Kermond (11th), Skye Horner (11th), Lori Heldon (30th)

What's "new" about the "New Church?"

A very common question, to be sure. Well, it all started just over 200 years ago... the main branches of the Christian church had become less correct, and one man named Emanuel Swedenborg had written volumes about how Christianity was missing the point. Some readers of Swedenborg realised he was right, and formed a new organisation that would strip away the centuries of politics and tradition and get back to what Christianity was supposed to be about: loving God and loving each other. Everything else could be seen as merely a difference of opinion if those two main principles reigned supreme through this new church.

As a result we believe in a positive Christianity, one where we look to the best in ourselves and others while still holding ourselves accountable to a higher standard and taking responsibility for our lives. Nowadays we're not so much "new" as we are "different." We still keep the name, and yet make every effort to incorporate the ideals that were instrumental in being "new" over two centuries ago.

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Call or come at any time.