

Children's sermon: February 1, 2009

"100 to 0 ---- ouch!!"

In the world of turtles ... it's a big game.

Mongo the huge turtle ... challenges Fred to a game of basketball. But --- something is not right. First of all --- Mongo is a giant. Slow (he is a turtle!!) but tall. And Fred? ---- he's a turtle, too ... and he's slow, like Mongo ... but he's so short. There is no way he can throw a ball up to the basket.

To add insult to injury ---- Mongo has two brand-new basketballs. Fred would like to use one ... but NO – Mongo won't share. Mongo gives Fred a soccer ball ---- "hey, use this in our game."
A soccer ball????? ... oh, well --- such is life in Mongo's world!!

The game is a joke.

Mongo makes shot after shot. It's 20-zip ... 40-zip ... 60-zip.
Fred tries to shoot with his soccer ball ... he comes nowhere near the basket.

When the game ends ... the score is ----- Mongo **100** ... Fred **0 (zip)!!**

Fred is deflated. You can just hear the air ... the self-esteem ... the confidence ... come right out of him.
Look --- there is no bounce left.
Fred is defeated.

Last night ... Mongo was alone in his room ... thinking about the game.

He loves to play b-ball ... he loves to win ... but he is not happy.
He knows what he did to Fred isn't right. It's one thing to play hard and win a game ... this is part of what life is all about. But ---- to crush someone? ... to embarrass another person? ... to win 100 to 0????
Not good.

This morning before church ... Mongo is looking for Fred. He finds him.

*"Fred ... I need to talk to you.
I'm so sorry for what happened. I got so caught up in winning ... and beating you ...
that I forgot to be decent and fair.
So, I've put something together for you. This is all from a thing called the "love bucket."
It has "stuff" inside that I've gotten in church. Reminders of God's love.
I want you to have it."*

Fred is moved. He looks at Mongo ... he smiles ... Mongo smiles back.
Then Fred says the magic words: "Mongo ---- thank-you for loving me."

Mongo doesn't know what to say. "Thank-you, Fred ... for loving me."

What are life's "magic words"???? ---- "thank-you ... for loving me."
And ... how about this song by Bon Jovi: "Thank-you, for loving me."

As a reminder of how much God loves you ----- here is your very own "love bucket" ...
with a whole-bunch-of-love inside!!