

Thought for the week 2022-02-10

My name is John. I'm the Baptist chaplain and part of the chaplaincy team at the university.

This Sunday is the American Football Super Bowl, so I've been particularly enjoying wearing my NFL Hat. My team didn't get to the Super Bowl, we did really well this year, but got knocked out in the semi-finals. We'll see who wins when Cincinnati play Los Angeles on Sunday. Cincinnati are most definitely the underdog.

We love to support the underdog if we are watching any sport as a neutral. It's great to see someone achieve something against the odds. I think it inspires us to think that we can achieve amazing things - if we stretch ourselves, and get a bit of luck perhaps, things can go our way.

I love the classic Bible story of David and Goliath. David was a shepherd boy who overcame the giant professional soldier Goliath in the power of God. Then there was Moses taking on the Pharaoh of Egypt, Daniel taking on the power-hungry sorcerers in Babylon. And in the New Testament there was Paul taking on the philosophers in Athens on Mars Hill too.

But the greatest underdog is surely Jesus. As he went to the cross, it looked like he had already lost, but as Christians, we believe that Jesus won a great victory for us against evil. Jesus defeated death and all evil when he died on the cross in our place so that we could live our lives today in the goodness of God and even overcome death in our resurrection - in Christ.

And today, we are not called to fight physical battles, but to fight spiritual battles against the evil in our own hearts, and to be champions of good in our society and in our world today.

We sometimes feel like the underdog. Like David against Goliath. Like the Cincinnati Bengals against the LA Rams. But we have the power of God with us. We should trust first and foremost in God whatever the circumstances or the apparent result. We should do it his way.

Humanly speaking, Jesus looked defeated when he died on a cross, but through his death Jesus achieved the greatest victory in history. And that is a victory we can share in if we trust and follow him.

Amen.