

Praying on Field Again: Perseverance Paying Off for Coach Joe Kennedy

As football returned over the Labor Day weekend, so did a sign of religious freedom in America. In Bremerton, Washington, Coach Joe Kennedy took a knee and prayed at midfield.

It looked like your normal Friday night high school football game, with one major exception.

After enduring an eight-year fight to publicly pray after games, a Supreme Court decision put Bremerton Assistant Football Coach Joe Kennedy back on the sidelines. That ruling meant that he could exercise his First Amendment right to pray.

Shortly after the game ended, Kennedy stood at the 50 yard-line at Bremerton Memorial Stadium, took a knee and bowed his head in prayer.

Afterward, the coach told a throng of waiting reporters what he prayed.

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"I said 'thank You' probably 30 times," he shared. "I had no other words. What do you say to the One who got me here to begin with?"

He referred to the lawsuit against the Bremerton School District, filed after he was fired for publicly praying. The Supreme Court ruled last year that the district had violated his constitutional rights.

“What we asked for from the Supreme Court and all the courts was just to be able to be a coach, and to be able to pray after a football game,” Kennedy stated.

He added, “What an awesome way to come back after an eight-year battle.”

The city of Bremerton is Coach Joe Kennedy’s boyhood home. He loves this place. It’s both picturesque and blue-collar, and it’s that hardscrabble approach that he needed to fight the eight-year ordeal.

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