

How the Fight for Prayer Continues, Even After Supreme Court Victory

Assistant high school football coach Joe Kennedy was fired from Bremerton High School in 2015 for kneeling in prayer after games. He started doing this by himself, but later would be joined by other coaches and players, none of whom were coerced into joining him.

Coach Kennedy would be vindicated seven years later in 2022, when the Supreme Court took his case and ruled in his favor 6-3. The freedom to pray and worship had been protected by the highest court in the country, but it would not be long until that same freedom would come under attack again.

Now, Cambridge Christian School is taking the Florida High School Athletic Association (FHSAA) to court, again. This is due to the decision to deny two Christian schools from saying a prayer over the loudspeaker at their state championship game in 2015.

While CBN News reported back in 2016 that CCS filed a lawsuit regarding this ban on prayer, it was dismissed by U.S. District Judge Charlene Edwards Honeywell. This would echo the same back-and-forth that Coach Kennedy would go through as well.

After bouncing between the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals and Judge Honeywell, who dismissed the case again, the First Liberty Institute is again filing on behalf of CCS, in no small part because of the ruling of the Supreme Court in favor of Joe Kennedy.

It is no surprise that many within the justice system are hostile towards Christian prayer. This has been a re-occurring

theme ever since the removal of prayer in schools in 1962. This momentous event occurred even though the United States has always been supportive of, and founded on, the freedom of religion—not *from* religion.

This freedom applies equally to all religions practiced in the U.S., yet it is no coincidence that Christianity is often singled out by the court system, and muzzled from exercising that right.

Even as Coach Kennedy, and many Christians across the country, were awaiting the Supreme Court's ruling on his case, his right to prayer was under attack from mainstream media. *Sports Illustrated* wrote an article and tweet stating that if Kennedy wins this case, it would be "an erosion of a bedrock of American Democracy." The article was then titled, "When Faith and Football Teamed Up Against American Democracy!"

In what world is standing up for one's faith and freedom of religion a threat to American democracy?

It is a world where the United States is becoming more and more hostile towards Christianity. Why? Because Jesus is the Truth, and Satan will never stop coming after believers until the day Jesus returns and Satan is cast into the burning lake (Rev. 20). These actions from activist judges will not stop, but they can be countered with perseverance, prayer and vigilance.

For Christians, the battle is ongoing until Jesus reigns from on high. In an increasingly secular world, groups such as the ACLU are fighting against officials from participating in any form of religious observance. This is a clear violation of an individual's right to worship, which does not end if they are hired by a government entity.

First Liberty Council explains this in their new filings for CCS:

“...Specifically, in 2015, FHSAA reversed its prior position and announced that when two religious schools play in the state championship football game, they are prohibited from using the stadium loudspeaker for pre-game prayer (the “Prayer Ban”). FHSAA offered only one reason for this ban: prayer over the loudspeaker could be ‘viewed as FHSAA endorsing or sponsoring religion.’ That rationale is eviscerated by the aforementioned cases, which explain that the Establishment Clause is a complement to, not a restriction on, free exercise...”

Christians must cover those fighting for their religious freedom in prayer. This is a spiritual battle as much as a judicial one. America has been a bastion for religious freedom, and the enemy that is made up of “principalities, powers, rulers of darkness of this world and spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places” (Eph. 6:12) is trying to undo the cornerstone of this nation’s founding. {eo}

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