

Eric Liddell – Greater than Gold

Eric Liddell was born in China. His parents were missionaries there. He spent his early childhood playing among the Chinese children. He spoke their language perfectly.

His parents brought Eric Liddell home to England for his high school and university education. During that time, he enjoyed running and was a very fast runner. He ran for England in the Olympic games although it wasn't the race he intended as his race occurred on the Sabbath. Eric Liddell was not prepared to break one of God's laws. The film, "Chariots of Fire" outlines his love for God during his training as a runner leading up to the Olympic games.

After the Olympic games, he married and believed God that he was to return to China. It was a dangerous time because the Japanese soldiers had invaded China and were treating the Chinese people badly. They killed many of them, burned their villages, and destroyed their crops. Despite these difficulties Eric stayed. He was sure God had called him to China.

He began teaching at a British-run Chinese college. He loved teaching the boys and challenging them in sports. However, life in China was becoming more difficult. The mission board decided to relocate Eric to the area he had grown up in.

Eric worked long hours travelling in the war torn area preaching and tending the sick. Many times, he had to carry the injured to the hospital on his bike over rough roads while dodging gunfire. In the meantime, the Japanese were taking over more of the country and there was talk that all foreigners would be locked up.

All foreigners were forced to move into an overcrowded prison camp. They lived in very bad conditions. There was no running water, the bathrooms did not work and they were given only a small bowl of soup and bread at each meal. Eric ran church services in the prison, schooled the children and helped take care of the sick. He became the most respected person in the prison because of his good attitude.

He was in the camp for 2 years when he became very sick. He had a stroke and was unable to walk. At 43, this super athlete began having trouble breaking. It was determined later he had a brain tumour and later he died in the camp. When the news reached Scotland, the entire country mourned Eric Liddell's death as their beloved athlete had died at a young age.

Eric's devotion to God and commitment to spread the story of Jesus would be remembered around the world.

Activities

- 1. Why did Eric Liddell give up running?***
- 2. How did he first help the Chinese people?***
- 3. What kind of difficulties did Eric find in China?***
- 4. What were the conditions like in the prison camp?***
- 5. What was Eric able to accomplish while he was living in the prison camp?***