

# The Cost of the Big Game

February is Black History Month, an annual observance in Canada, the United Kingdom, the United States and the Netherlands (although known in that country as Black Achievement Month).

It began as a way for remembering important people and events in the history of the African diaspora (the dispersion of any people from their original homeland).



One of those individuals was certainly Jackie Robinson.

The Hollywood film *42* is the story of that legendary baseball player, who was the first African-American to play major league baseball (with the Brooklyn Dodgers).

He played in six World Series games and drove in the winning run in the deciding game of the 1955 World Series. Robinson was noted for his heady plays, his tenacity and his amazing ability to steal bases. But most of all, Jackie Robinson was noted for his character. Even in the thick of racist ridicule and criticism, hateful acts and discrimination, Robinson demonstrated temperance.

How did he do it? Did he know how hard it would be to be the first black major league baseball player?

One of the most interesting scenes in the movie is when Robinson is in a meeting with the president of the Dodgers, Branch Rickey. Rickey is telling Robinson what he needs to do in order for the team to succeed. He says:

“People aren’t going to like this ... they’ll do anything to get you to react. Echo a curse with a curse and they’ll hear only yours. Follow a blow with a blow and they’ll say the Negro lost his temper. Your enemy will be out in force and you can’t beat him on his own low ground ... Like our Savior, you gotta have the guts to turn the other cheek. Will you?”

After a pause, Robinson replied, “Give me a uniform, give me a number on my back, and I’ll give you the guts.”

(more)

There seemed to be eternity in that pause. Robinson had to take a moment to do a heart check. He had to count the cost. Although he had no idea what it would really be like, he had to consider that times would be hard and difficult. There would be times when it would be more painful to live out his passion for baseball than it would be fun. He was being offered the opportunity of a lifetime – but it had a heavy cost.

Jesus Christ has offered us, the entire world, the opportunity of a lifetime. He offers us the gift of becoming sons and daughters of the Most High God, enjoying a relationship with Him, the Creator of everything, and living with Him forever.

Like all relationships, following Jesus requires commitment, and all commitments require sacrifice. Jesus sacrificed His life, endured the shame of the cross and bore our sins in His sinless body so that we could have life to the full (Hebrews 12:2 and John 10:10).

So the question for each of us is: What are we willing to sacrifice, endure and bear in order to live the life that Jesus died for?

*And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it (Luke 14:27-28 NKJV).*

– Beecher Hunter