

Thought for the Day 2nd September - John Reed

Read Isaiah 40:27-31

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed all of our lives in various ways.

For some, it means working from home rather than going into the office. For some, it means coming to terms with home schooling. For some, it has meant being distanced and isolated from family and friends.

For Melissa Breen, it has meant early retirement.

Melissa Breen is (or was?) a sprinter. Australia's fastest woman ever. And in Tokyo this year she was due to make her third appearance at the Olympic Games. It was also, at the age of 29, to be her swansong. And then the pandemic came, and the Games were postponed to next year. And ... Melissa knew what she had to do. Retire.

Some people have asked her why she can't just hold on for another year. To which she replies:

"Holding on and being elite don't align ... Every single choice I made was: is this going to help me run fast or not? It takes up so many waking hours. I could only work half days, four days a week. Everything else was training, rehab, mobility practice, physio, gym, pilates class. Every single week. So much upkeep is required to continue. You can only run on that wheel for so long. It's exhausting."¹

So, at the grand old age of 29, she has retired.

She is not alone, of course. I am sure that there are other athletes who have made the same decision since the Olympics were postponed. And we all know that an athlete's career is short anyway. At the moment there is speculation in the Rugby League media surrounding the playing futures of Benji Marshall and Cameron Smith who, at the ages of 35 and 37 respectively are regarded as grand old men of the game who are coming to the ends of their careers.

Imagine being regarded as being over the hill and past your best, due to retire even, by the age of 30, or 37 if you're a superhuman like Cameron Smith!

Sport is a hard task master. But it's just a warning to the rest of us that our time will surely come. In construction, or teaching, or business, your due date may not come up quite so quickly. But that day will still come when you have to hang up your boots (to stick with the sporting theme) and leave the game to younger players.

But not so with God. As year gives way to year, and decade to decade, and century to century, and millennium to millennium, Isaiah 40:28 still holds true:

The Lord is the everlasting God,
the Creator of the ends of the earth.
He does not faint or grow weary;
his understanding is unsearchable.

¹ <https://www.smh.com.au/lifestyle/life-and-relationships/tokyo-was-to-be-her-swan-song-but-her-body-can-t-wait-another-year-20200820-p55niq.html>