



Eric Liddell

"Circumstances may appear to wreck our lives and God's plans, but God is not helpless among the ruins. God's love is still working. He comes in and takes the calamity and uses it victoriously, working out His wonderful plan of love."

Eric Liddell (1902-1945) was one of the great athletes of his generation as well as a person of deep faith. Liddell was born to missionary parents in China, which would become his adopted country. He returned to his native land of Scotland for his education, where he soon developed into an elite athlete. Nicknamed the "Flying Scotsman" for his speed, he also was the best rugby player on the national team. Going into the 1924 Paris Olympics, he was a strong favorite to win the 100m dash, but he withdrew from the race for religious reasons when the heats were scheduled for a Sunday. He then achieved a shocking upset when he took gold in the 400m event with an Olympic record time. Yet, this famous story, later made into the acclaimed film *Chariots of Fire*, was only the beginning. He became a missionary and returned to China in 1925, serving there until the end of his life. After the Japanese invasion during World War II, he was placed with other foreigners in an internment camp. There, he was a leader in keeping up the spirits of his fellow prisoners. He was particularly encouraging to the children, whom he served as teacher and coach, creating a regular routine of learning and games for them. Sadly, he died in February 1945 from a brain tumor exacerbated by the poor conditions of the camp.

Eric Liddell is a hero of faith and an inspiration to millions to this day. A memorial at the site of the concentration camp is one of the few Christian monuments in China. It contains the famous verse from the Book of Isaiah: "*They shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary.*" He provides an incredible example of courage and conviction, and we honor the legacy of his life and work.