

My friends, I have to believe that I am not the only one who is tired of reading Donald Trump Tweet about Ben Carson , or Mrs. Clinton’s email server. If you are one of them, join my program, created only as I was typing this sermon, called “Dump Trump: Go Sendrow.” Understand, this has nothing to do with politics—I’m not running for President. This is about Twitter. Dump Trump, add to my now 467 followers, and you would know that while my sermon is not for sports fans only, tonight I am going to speak about a life lesson we can learn from this year’s World Series.

Although this is not a sermon geared to sports fans, some background information is necessary. You have to win four baseball games to win the World Series, which is either seven games or fewer if a team reaches four wins in fewer than seven games.

You also have to understand that today, professional baseball teams have a specialist called a closer. A closer is a pitcher who is paid millions of dollars to do one thing: get three outs. He therefore plays a mere one-half inning. What makes being a closer difficult is the closer usually pitches the last inning of a game in which his team is winning by three runs or fewer. That is when the team manager calls on his closer.

On what proved to be the last game of the World Series, the Mets starting pitcher was doing something we rarely see today. He had pitched eight full innings—some say that merely six innings is considered a “quality start”—and as a competitive professional athlete, naturally he wanted to pitch the ninth inning, pitch a complete game, and get a win so the Mets would stay alive to play another game (they were losing the Series 3-1 at that point). Any pitcher in MLB would have wanted the same thing. That is why it is not the pitcher’s decision, it is the team manager’s decision.

Admittedly, the Mets starter had been doing beautifully, and wanted to stay in the game so badly that on television you could see him arguing with his manager in the dugout. I could give you a long list of solid baseball reasons why the manager should not have listened to the pitcher, but then this would be a sports fan sermon, so instead I will mention only one: the Mets had zero margin for error. If they lost—and lose they did—they went home having lost the World Series. That should have been reason enough for the manager to tell his starting pitcher, “You’ve been great and I understand you want to stay in, but this is why we have a closer.” He did not. He gave in to his starting pitcher, who lost half of his two run lead almost immediately, and by the time the manager did bring in the closer, the Royals needed only a single to tie the game. They did tie it in the ninth inning, and went on to win in extra innings. Odds are at least quite high that had the manager made what he knew was the correct move and brought in his very capable closer, the Series would have gone on to Game Six with the Royals leading three games to two. Instead, he did not, and the Mets were finished.

That’s the backstory. No more baseball talk until after services. Now we get to the life lesson from this World Series. It is the issue of standards vs. compassion. It is a very common dilemma in our lives.

If you have no compassion, no feelings, you are not fully human. If all your decisions are based on feelings, many of them will turn out to be well-intended mistakes, like the one that sent the Royals back to Kansas City for a victory parade, while the Mets got to watch *The View*. Feelings are precious; please do not think I am saying otherwise. Making some decisions based on feelings is appropriate. Making all decisions based on feelings is not. Our task is not to do what feels good; it is to do what does good. That is why we need religion.

Look, for example, at the last five of the Ten Commandments. Every one tells us what *not* to do. Why? If no one did anything bad, there would be nothing to

fill the void but the good. If that were not true, I think one of the Ten Commandments would be, “Be a good and nice person.”

One last example that we all know well. We read twice a day in the Shema, “Do not be led astray by your eyes and heart after which you go whoring.” We can’t count on our hearts. We need standards by which to live. Judaism provides them to us. That is why I make every effort to draw my values, which then determine my actions, from the Torah and Judaism. I am, by nature, compassionate. That compassion sometimes needs to be moderated by standards.

That was the lesson that emerged from the World Series. All of us can learn from it. Did the Mets manager learn the lesson? We’ll find out the next time a pitcher begs to stay in a must-win game. Something tells me the fifth game of the 2015 World Series will come to his mind. We’ll know if he learned from that game if he says, “I get how you feel, but sorry, my job is to manage the team. I’m going with the closer.”