

# MercEmail A Weekly Devotional by Steve Higginbotham

## Olympic Medal "Oar" Maybe Not

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In every Olympic Games, there are compelling human interest stories. For those of you who are old enough to remember, names like Dan Jansen and Derek Redmond bring to mind heart-tugging stories. But allow me to introduce you to one of my heroes from the 2012 London Games. His name is Hamadou Djibo Issaka.

Hamadou is from the West African country of Niger. Six months ago he was working as a gardener. Just three months ago, he took up the sport of "sculling," (rowing). In his heat, he finished 1:39 seconds behind the winning sculler. To put that in perspective, that means that he finished three and a half football fields behind the winner! As a result, he's been dubbed the "Sculling Sloth."

Obviously, he wasn't in the same class as his competitors. In fact, he told a reporter after the race that he was just glad that he didn't make his boat fall over. Although he was totally exhausted, he was determined to finish the race and he did. He said the cheers of the spectators kept him going.

Friends, doesn't that remind you of life? For some, life comes so easy and they can row with grace and speed through still waters. But for others, life seems to come hard, and requires rowing against the wind through troubled waters. No matter how life comes to you, don't quit! Finish the race, and when you do, you won't be judged by your speed, but by your perseverance.

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