

Pastor's Letter October 2021

Hello! everyone,

By now you are all probably aware that I fell after worship in my house on Sunday, September 20. Because of that fall, I broke the radius in my wrist and 2 ribs. My first thought was: Oh No! I don't have time for this! I was lying on the floor face down with family members standing around me saying things like: Are you alright? What happened? Are you hurt? Let Brian help you up. You know the typical questions from loved ones when an accident occurs. As I lay there for a moment trying to gather my senses. I felt the pain in my wrist first and then the ribs. Again the "I don't have time for this" went through my mind and quickly went to Why now? why today?

Now that I am sitting in my room, typing this post with one finger, preparing for surgery tomorrow, I no longer am asking why. I may never know the answer to the whys and that is okay. It is important to me that God knows why and that he will use this event for good.

Maybe the good was for my friend and colleague Rev. Dr. Sarah Dorrance to bring the third Story sermon to you. Or maybe it is good for Nathan Payton to get the practice of preaching as he brings the fourth Story sermon to you. Maybe God was trying to remind me once again that He is in charge, and it will all be good.

The following devotion is printed in Great is Thy Faithfulness for September 13. I shared it with Candy and Wanda on that date. Maybe God was trying at that time to not only prepare me, but them as well for what we would consider to be evil events: my fall and Wanda's illness.

Turning Evil into Good

R: 1 Thessalonians 2:13-18

We wanted to come to you... but Satan hindered us.

The apostle Paul told the believers at Thessalonica that he and his coworkers wanted to visit them, but Satan hindered them. Does it disturb you to read that a child of God can be blocked by the devil from doing what he believes to be the will of God? If it does, remember that nothing happens without God's knowledge nor apart from His direct or permissive will. The Lord can take any deed, whether of Satan or man, and turn it around for His own purposes and glory. The devil's hindering of Paul, for example, resulted in great benefit to Christians! Because the apostle couldn't speak to the Thessalonians personally, he wrote them a letter. This portion of the Bible has been a source of rich blessing and comfort to believers down through the centuries.

I'm reminded of Joseph's response to his brothers who had sold him into slavery. They feared that he would seek revenge, but he said, "You meant evil against me, but God meant it for a good" (Genesis 50:20).

What a comfort to know that nothing happens apart from the will of our heavenly Father! He is all-wise,

all-knowing, all-powerful. Under God's sovereign control, evil can be turned around to accomplish his good purposes.

In Christ's service,
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