

Devotion: Wednesday, April 22, 2020

Romans 8:28-29

²⁸ *We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.* ²⁹ *For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family.*

Okay:

Now breathe in.....and let out a huge sigh!

You needed that.

It's been stressful.

I mean, why is this happening? Why are so many good people suffering?

The Bible never really answers that question.

And, I think that as we wrestle with this question of why bad things happen to good people, we need to offer another question: What happens to good people when bad things happen to them? This is a question that the Bible does answer.

In the eighth chapter of Romans, Paul uses several words to describe the assumed pain and suffering of life: hardship, persecution, distress, nakedness, peril, the sword. Paul and the early Christians were very much in touch with unfair suffering. But what did Paul say happens to us when we experience bad things? Not only did he say that we will never be separated from God's love, but in Romans 8:28 Paul says something truly remarkable: "*All things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.*"

This verse tells us that evil and pain is never the will of God, but God can take evil and pain and use it for good. Over and over again in life we see this. When evil attacks with pain, God uses it to build character. When evil shows resistance, God uses it to build strength. When evil cripples with tragedy, God finds a way to victory. When evil destroys with death, God restores life. God is in the transformation business.

The ultimate example of this is Jesus' work on the cross. Before Jesus, the cross represented suffering, shame, punishment, and death. But he came and transformed it into a symbol of victory, forgiveness, love and life. So whenever we see the cross we are reminded that God can take what is ugly and make it beautiful.

We can't control the fact that bad things will happen to us. They just do, and one day we will find out why. But the one thing we can control is how we respond to the bad things that happen to us. We can get bitter or better! We can stay angry at life and at God and never move on, or we can give our pain to God and allow him to do something beautiful with it.

I found this on the internet, and would like to share:

*I will be untouched in the midst of fire
I will stand firm in the midst of a storm
I will not crack in the midst of chaos
I will not lose heart when the world is torn*

*I will not fear when the heat blazes
I will not fret when drought comes
I will bear fruit in the midst of all of it
I will march to a different drum*

*I will discover victory in tragedy
I will trust in El Shaddai
I will laugh in the face of death
I will wave evil and pain goodbye*

Amen.

Stay well

Pastor Jack