

Devotion: Monday, March 16, 2020

To all of my friends;

Tragedy can strike so quickly and unpredictably. While going about our everyday lives, in a moment, in the blink of an eye, the world can be changed. As a nation we've been living with that awful reality since 9-11. Thousands killed for no reason by complete strangers, who assumed, somehow in their mind, they were doing some good for this world. Then there are natural disasters: tsunamis, earthquakes, floods, tornadoes...If you have avoided tragedy at this point in your life thank God that you have been spared, but consider yourself lucky as well. And now as a world we are dealing with the COVID-19 virus and the uncertain nature it has brought to our every day lives.

Most of us know that God did not cause this tragedy. The Bible states clearly that God does not willingly afflict or grieve the children of men (Lamentations 3:33). The greater problem for most believers is this: Why does God allow such awful things to happen?

If God won't promise us safety, what does He promise? He promises that He will not allow more to be put on us that we, with His help, can bear. He promises that His grace will be sufficient for our needs. He promises that nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from His love. And, no matter how bad something may be, He promises that if we share it with Him in faith, He will make it produce some good. Those are God's promises.

But as for the answer to the question "why," it won't be given. Stop looking for it. Instead, Jesus would have us switch to a different question, a better question, a more faithful question. It is this one: What good can this tragedy produce?

When a heartbreak or an accident or an illness or a death comes, let this be our question:

"Heavenly God, what use can you make of my hard times?" If we share our hard times with God in faith, God will make something useful and creative out of every tragedy that darkens our lives.

If life breaks your heart or health or takes your finances, you can whimper and whine and demand an explanation. But no explanation will be given. People of faith place their sorrows on the altar and ask God to use them. Then even our heartaches and sorrows serve His purposes and declare His praises. And in the process, our own hearts are strangely comforted.

Now, let me close with a prayer by Ruth H. Calkin, from her book entitled, "Lord, Could You Hurry a Little?"

"Lord, you who permit my grief
Are the only One
Who can assuage it.
I wonder...
Do you permit grief
That I might learn
To be content
With nothing less
Than the comfort of God?
Whatever the reason
One thing I am learning:
You make useful to me
All that you permit.
So, dear God
Though a great ache
Wells within my heart
I ask you to grip my life.
Empower me to go
From depth to depth with You
Until I am a "wounded healer"
Bringing your comfort to others
As you are now comforting me. Amen.

Please keep all of our brothers and sisters in our congregation in our prayers. Check on your neighbors. We will keep you posted on what is happening this weekend about worship.

Keep Safe and pray always

Pastor Jack