

KING OF KINGS LUTHERAN CHURCH



Romans 8:28

You're Not Crazy if You Believe . . . All Works for Good

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

“It will all work out for the best” sometimes just sounds naïve, doesn’t it? In our Gospel Lesson for today, do you think that the disciples in a boat that we being swamped by a furious storm were thinking “This will all work out for the best”? No, they thought they were going to drown. They were frightened.

The situations we may face in life don’t always lend themselves to “it will all work out for the best.” Sometimes the sadness and heart ache linger for a long time. Sometimes the job loss or the financial troubles are frightening. Sometimes the news from the doctor is terrifying. Sometimes the actions or sins of loved ones will change your life forever.

For the past few Sundays we’ve looked at some of the teachings of the Bible that the world thinks are crazy. But it isn’t just the world that thinks the Bible’s teachings are crazy. Sometimes we do too. Can the words of our text really come true . . . every time? Can those deeply troubling times in life really be for our good? Or are we just being piously naïve?

Our text is from a glorious section of the Bible. At the end of Romans chapter 7, Paul spoke of the struggle that all Christians face. We want to do good, we want to stop sinning; but we don’t. Our desire to do good doesn’t always win out. Instead, excuses and habits often control us and a sin is repeated. Loveless, cold attitudes and actions continue to live in us. Thoughtless words continue to flow from our mouths. Tempers continue to flair. Laziness continues to own us. We don’t want it that way, but it is that way!

Chapter 8 of Romans begins with **“Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”** In spite of our failures, our guilt is removed. Through faith in Jesus, we **“in**

Christ Jesus,” and therefore our sin is not held against us. Jesus took the burden of our sins onto himself when he died on the cross. His death was the payment that God demanded and God’s anger at our sins is fully satisfied. While we still live in this sinful world and even still sin ourselves, through faith in Christ we members of God’s family and have nothing to fear from him.

“No condemnation” because of Jesus is the key to understanding our text. As Paul continued to write in Romans 8, he spoke of our new status before God. We are not controlled by the sinful nature. As we live by faith, we have life and peace in Christ. We are not afraid of God, but call him, **“Abba, Father”** because he dearly loves us.

Paul’s first application of the fact that we are not condemned before God is in v. 18: **“I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing to the glory that will be revealed in us.”** So often we focus on the present. Paul lifts our eyes to the eternal. What awaits us in heaven is so glorious that the heart aches and troubles of today will be forgotten; washed away by the eternal glory of heaven. That is not just naïve piety, but a certain hope for the Christian.

Paul continued. As we groan in this life from the troubles we face, we know that God himself watches over us. In fact, the Holy Spirit intercedes before the Father when we don’t know what to pray for. You know those moments: When the sadness lingers, or the news from the doctor is terrifying, or life is about to change because of a choice someone made, you don’t always know what to pray. But you are a child of God — punishment has been removed forever! So the Holy Spirit willingly intervenes for you. He supplies the words you cannot find. There is divine help for God’s children.

And then comes our text. **And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.** It isn't just naïve optimism that imagines "It will all work out for the best." It is God's promise that because our sin is removed and we are his children, that he will not punish us, but will always act in love toward us.

The cross is at the center of the Christian's life. We don't just pull the cross out for a dose of *Sunday School theology* — "Jesus took my sins away." That is true and powerful! But having heard that our sins are forgiven, we don't tuck the cross back into the Bible and then move on. Jesus didn't just take your sins away and leave the rest of life for you to deal with.

The cross of Christ — in truth, everything about Jesus — assures us that all works for our good. We are so wrapped in the love of God that nothing can hurt us or separate us from God.

Yet the heart aches and trials of life are real. We try to appear strong and self-reliant, but allow a few troubles to arise and we crumple. When the problems get real big, we are overwhelmed.

What was the problem for the disciples in the boat in our Gospel Lesson? Some were seasoned fishermen who knew this storm was a doozy. But regardless of their background, what did they all forget? Why did Jesus chide them, **"Do you still have no faith?"**

They forgot that Jesus was in the boat with them. They were fooled into thinking he didn't care because he was asleep. He didn't act the way they wanted him to and so they accused Jesus of not caring. Imagine that. "Jesus doesn't care," they suggested.

But the truth is, you know how they felt. Sometimes it seems like Jesus is asleep. How can he let a evil, crazy gunman into a church in South Carolina? Why doesn't he end our drought? Why does your heart ache? Why won't the trouble

just go away!?! Doesn't Jesus care enough to do something?

The question for us is why doesn't he calm the storms sooner. The answer is that his ways are not your ways. His wisdom is higher than yours. His view of your life is more complete than your own view. He sees what you cannot. He is not just concerned about you paying your mortgage or even surviving an illness. He wants you in heaven! He wants you there so much he died for you. In his wisdom, he allows things to happen that you may not understand. But he gives you a promise — a promise that hinges on his cross. His promise is that it will all work out for the best — his best! He is in the boat with you. He's not going to let it sink and lose you.

Sometimes, after time passes you can see the good God had in mind. After an illness that led him to death's door that he survived only by divine intervention, Hezekiah said, **"Surely it was for my benefit that I suffered such anguish. In your love you kept me from the pit of destruction"** (Isaiah 38:17). But sometimes we just don't know why we suffer. God never told Job why. We don't always see why either.

But knowing why doesn't change the reality of God's love. Proof of God's love is the cross of Jesus, not the circumstances of your life. It is not naïve to say that "everything will work out for the best." It is faith in Jesus! It is the cross connecting us God's love.

You are not crazy when you look at the storms of life and trust that all will work for your good. Even as the waves pour into the boat, don't give up. Your Savior is in the boat with you and will not let you be overwhelmed. He will bless you. Amen.

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