

The Bewildering Call of God

“Jesus took the Twelve aside and told them, “We are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written by the prophets about the Son of Man will be fulfilled. He will be delivered over to the Gentiles. They will mock him, insult him and spit on him; they will flog him and kill him. And on the third day he will rise again.”

The disciples did not understand any of this. Its meaning was hidden from them, and they did not know what he was talking about.” Luke 18:31-34

I have heard the call of God in recent weeks, and it seemed so clear to me because I was inspired to create something new, a new website - something I thought would be helpful to others. I knew with certainty that God was leading me. Then they started one roadblock, one brick wall after another. The technology I am using seemed to betray me at every turn, and I wondered if this initiative was what God was calling me to after all. I remember going into our garden room at home where I journal and pray and, and as I journaled, I wrote to God these words:

“Oh, dear Father my feeling of loneliness pulls me down into the darkness and dust. Empty exasperation haunts me”

I continued to sit there and write for a while and out of the blue, these words came to me from God as they sometimes do:

“All of this exasperation is but a puff of air in this room where you and I abide together.”

As I paused and just listened for the still quiet voice of God, I thought of Jesus’ heart and his face dripping with blood on the cross. I allowed myself to sit still in the presence of the suffering Jesus. And eventually these words poured out onto the page as I typed

“...But, Jesus, even in my frustration I can locate the crimson beat of your heart, for you inhabit every corner of my being.”

I allowed all of this to wash over me like the warm waves of a crystal blue lake and I wrote these words to God:

“...under the roof of your home abides your Son, my Brother Jesus, who leaves in an instant to chase after me when I get lost. Your Spirit bubbles up inside me in the most unanticipated circumstances. And I need do nothing... but rest in you... do nothing but breathe in the lively current of your fluid, abundant grace.”

And then and there, in my moment of dryness and emptiness, God and his Son came to rescue me. But first I had to be honest and admit my feelings, the way I felt empty. I had to abandon the confidence I had known in the earlier call of God and admit my sense of powerlessness and frustration. And once I did that, I could hear God again.

You know, looking at Jesus on the cross and how his life ended on earth, how everyone seemed to think he was an absolute failure. But from God’s point of view Jesus was in triumph “because God’s purpose -- is hardly ever the same as man’s purpose.”

The bewildering call of God comes into our lives. But sometimes we are very much like those apostles as Jesus told them what was about to happen to him in Jerusalem. They did not understand. Or they were in denial. But isn’t it the same with us? God’s will can never be understood absolutely or adequately explained, even in the spirited language of poets..... Sometimes his will and his call to us just bubbles up inside our inner human nature. Oswald Chambers describes it in a way that makes so much sense to me. This is what he said:

“The call of God cannot be definitely stated, because his call is simply - to be his friend - and to accomplish his own purposes.” It is that simple. But how hard it is for me sometimes to believe that all I have to do is concentrate of being Jesus’ friend. And all he wants me to do is to accomplish his purposes, his will for me.

Chambers goes on to say:

“Our test is in truly believing that God knows what he desires. The things that happen do not happen by chance – they happen entirely by the decree of God. God is sovereignly working out his own purposes.”

Just yesterday I woke up with a certainty I have never had about the sovereignty of God. Eventually, after we have fled God by getting wrapped up with this task and the other, with so many distractions that are very easy to find, God will make things work in HIS way. It might take a long time because he gives us free will. But that’s another devotional or discussion. Often his way is not my way, but sometimes it is. I rediscover what his way is here in this community. Here in the Bible. In my relationships where I am not in control. When I give up control it is easier for God to have his way.

Jesus Christ called his disciples to see him put to death, leading every one of them to the place where their hearts would be broken.

Watching and listening to the survivors of the Maui wildfires, floods, and the recent horrific earthquake is heart-breaking so why would we even decide to watch it? Because Christ is Alive here in our homes and there in Hawaii and Morocco and Libya. The Body of Christ is suffering, and I think I am called to suffer with him even although my instincts tell me to escape these pictures and news stories. Being alive in Christ means that I am willing to dwell a while in the presence of the pathetic failure of humans to control everything. We, like Jesus, might look and feel like failures. But to see how God triumphs in Hawaii or in our hearts as we feel their pain takes not only a human effort and triumph but even more important, a spiritual one.

So rather than asking myself what is God’s purpose in allowing such tragedies, instead maybe I should begin to see that the compelling purpose of God lies behind everything in life, and God is divinely shaping us into oneness with that purpose.

When I am frustrated with my new project and my purposes and I hit a brick wall, maybe I need to stop, adopt a different approach, a relaxed pace which is the pace that should be characteristic of all the children of God.

Based on Oswald Chambers, August 5th devotional in [My Utmost for His Highest](#)