

For Our Good?

by Linville Dunaway, Corinth Christian Church

Romans 8:28, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."

What would we think would be for our good? Would it be something that was pleasant and that which we wanted? I believe that it would be hard to find anyone who would think it would be something that would be hard, harsh, or painful. After all, how could something like that be good for us? If we notice what was said in Romans 8:28 we can see that he didn't say that all things were good, but that they would work for good to the saved.

Naturally we like that which is easy and pleasurable, so we might wonder how anything else could be good for us. Looking back over our lives we might ask ourselves this, "Did we learn and grow during the easy pleasant times, or was it in the difficult times?" The easy times we enjoyed and rested, but we don't learn in those times, nor grow stronger.

Scripture gives us many lessons and to me, one

of the best examples is the story of Joseph. He has to be one of the greatest men of faith that is in the bible. I am certain that I could not have faced the trials that he did and done as well as he did. For one thing he was young at only seventeen years of age when he was hated of his brothers who at first wanted to kill him. Then they sold him as a slave and he was taken from his home and family, even as he begged them to not do this to him. Then in Egypt he was accused of trying to assault Potiphar's wife and put in prison. He spent thirteen years as a slave in Egypt with part of the time being in prison. He helped a servant of Pharaoh who forgot him for two years. There was one disappointment after another even as he tried to do what was right and keep the faith. Most of us would have become bitter and given up on all people and maybe even on God.

Joseph didn't give up. He, like Job, kept looking to God and holding on to his faith. I'm sure that he had a lot of time to look at his life and I know that he had to ask the Lord why all this had to happen to him. Don't we do that when bad things happen to us as we try to live for the Lord? I have heard people say, "Why has this happened to me when I'm trying to live for the Lord?" It is human nature to try to figure

things out and we want to know what is going on. We don't see in the bible that God revealed to Joseph what he had planned. Either way Joseph trusted in the Lord and didn't give up, or let himself become bitter and hateful. It is not hard to believe that Satan was there to whisper in his ear that God had forsaken him and that there was no use in holding on to a useless faith. Since he deceived Eve in Eden he has been telling mankind to give up on God and live, taking what pleasure that we can.

Joseph was like all of us in that he went through trials and many sorrows. In spite of all these things he continued to trust God and didn't lose his faith. And, like everyone else, his trials finally came to an end. For there came a day when he got up and went about his day, not knowing that this was the day that he would walk out of the prison. Think of it! He began the day as a prisoner and before day's end he was the second most powerful ruler in all of Egypt.

Joseph would have preferred an easier way of coming to this point in his life, but he trusted in God and walked in faith. There had been a lot of "Bad" things that happened to him, but it had worked out for his good. He went from a hated shepherd to a merciful ruler in Egypt.

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This is a dramatized version of facts taken from the book of I Samuel intending to show some of the customs of these ancient and traditional times

DAVID'S fighting courage
KING SAUL HOPES THAT DAVID WILL BE KILLED FIGHTING THE PHILISTINES THAT HE HAS ENTICED DAVID TO GO FORTH AND FIGHT, NOW....

BEHOLD, JOASH, THAT CLOUD OF DUST BETOKENS MANY MEN AFOOT!

...DAVID'S SCOUTS ARE BUSY SPYING OUT THE LAND.

PHILISTINE WARRIORS! WE MUST TELL DAVID OF THIS AT ONCE!

O, DAVID, THE PHILISTINES HAVE MADE THEIR CAMP IN THE FIELD AND THEY ARE STRONG IN NUMBER!

THEY ARE AS MANY AS THE BLADES OF GRASS IN A HUGE FIELD!

HOW THEN SHALL WE BE ABLE TO PREVAIL AGAINST THEM!

DO WE NOT FIGHT THE LORD'S BATTLE — AND WILL HE NOT SUSTAIN US?!

BUT COME LET US LOOK OVER THE LAND THAT LIES BETWEEN US AND THE PHILISTINES!

HERE NOW, IS A GOOD AND GENTLE SLOPE, WHERE THE PHILISTINES CAN CHARGE AGAINST US WITH CONSUMING SPEED!

MUST THOU PICK A GOOD FIELD OF BATTLE FOR OUR ENEMIES, WHO OUTNUMBER US, DAVID? HOW THEN CANST WE STAND BEFORE THEM?!

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