

everyone else around her. She had become cynical and moody. She blamed God for what had happened and said, "I hate Him. Why would this happen to me? Where was God when I was going through labour, the excruciating pain of giving birth to a stillborn child? Why didn't He give me a healthy baby?"

We do not understand the mystery of why God allows certain tragedies, heartaches and sorrows, but we do know that those who trust the eternal God as their refuge will experience the reality of His promise, *"The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms"* (Deuteronomy 33:27).

By contrast, sometime later I talked with a godly Christian whose son had just taken his own life. Of course, this man and his wife were devastated. Their hearts were broken. But what a difference there was in their reaction. Even through his tears, this dear follower of Jesus was saying, "I know I can trust God. He is a loving Saviour. He is my refuge, and I feel His strength and compassion and care for me and my loved ones. My wife and I and all of our family are rededicating ourselves to Him as an expression of our love and confidence in His trustworthiness."

It may not always be easy to do and it may go against our fleshly nature, but it is important to follow the Holy Spirit's exhortation in *1 Thessalonians 5:18*: *"Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus"*. God does not say in some circumstances, or in most circumstances, or only in the pleasant circumstances, but in ALL circumstances.

God is not the author of tragedy. We live in a sin-sick, devil-infested world. Tragedy comes to believers and non-believers alike. But when it does come, God is always there to comfort and to work out everything for our long-term good according to Romans 8:28.

No matter what happens, let us thank and praise Him.

Yours for helping to fulfil the Great Commission each year until our Lord returns,

Bill Bright (see photo, inner fold)



Central Mountains Baptist Church

OCTOBER 28, 2018

Blame Him Or Thank Him?

No matter what happens, always be thankful, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus (1 Thessalonians 5:18).

Dear friends:

This is the story of two people and their two different approaches to tragedy.

Susan was broken-hearted. She had just lost her first child at birth. The trauma of that experience had affected her relationship with her husband and with



Insights for Living Standfast in Peace 3



- #1. Standfast in harmony, v2-3
- #2. Standfast in joy, v4
- #3. Standfast in gentleness, v5
- #4. Standfast in peace, v6-7**
- #5. Standfast in thought, v8
- #6. Standfast in action, v9

Philippians 3:10, 8

Today we consider three calming aspects of God's character:

1. God _____ us,

(Jeremiah 31:3) "The LORD has appeared of old to me, saying: "Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; Therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you."

(Ephesians 1:4) "just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, ..."

(1 John 4:19) "We love Him because He first loved us."

(Romans 8:31-32) "What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? {32} He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?"

(Romans 5:8) "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

(Romans 8:35) "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?"

(Romans 8:38-39) "For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, {39} nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

(Ephesians 3:14-19) "For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, .. {17} .. that you, being rooted and grounded in love, {18} may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height; {19} to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; ..."

(Isaiah 43:2-5) "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; And through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, Nor shall the flame scorch you. {3} For I am the LORD your God, The Holy One of Israel, your Savior; {4} Since you were precious in My sight, You have been honoured, And I have loved you; ... {5} Fear not, for I am with you; ...;"



2. God has _____ for us, verses 6-7

(Genesis 50:20) "'... God meant it for good, ...'"

(Romans 8:28-29) "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. {29} For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren."

(Jeremiah 29:11) "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope."



Bill Bright

(Jeremiah 29:1) "Now these are the words of the letter that Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem to the remainder of the elders who were carried away captive; ... from Jerusalem to Babylon."

(Jeremiah 29:10-11) "For thus says the LORD: After seventy years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, and cause you to return to this place. {11} For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope."

(Isaiah 14:27) "For the LORD of hosts has purposed, And who will annul it? His hand is stretched out, And who will turn it back?"

3. God only makes _____ for our lives, verses 6-7

(Psalms 139:1-6) "O LORD, You have searched me and known me. {2} You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thought afar off. {3} You comprehend my path and my lying down, And are acquainted with all my ways. {4} For there is not a word on my tongue, But behold, O LORD, You know it altogether. ... {6} Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; It is high, I cannot attain it."

(Colossians 2:1-3) "For I want you to know what a great conflict I have for you and those in Laodicea,..., {2} that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, and attaining to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ, {3} in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

(Romans 11:33-36) "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! {34} "For who has known the mind of the LORD? Or who has become His counselor?" {35} "Or who has first given to Him And it shall be repaid to him?" {36} For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen
(Isaiah 55:6-9) "Seek the LORD while He may be found, Call upon Him while He is near. {7} Let the wicked forsake his way, And the unrighteous man his thoughts; Let him return to the LORD, And He will have mercy on him; And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon. {8} "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," says the LORD. {9} "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts."

(Psalms 46:10) "Be still, and know that I am God; ...!"

(Isaiah 26:3) "You will keep him in perfect peace, Whose mind is stayed on You, Because he trusts in You."



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