

Park Pages

the magazine of Uddingston: Park United Free Church of Scotland



Pastoral Letter

Summer 2024

Dear Friends,

Some information recently landed on my desk concerning **Resilience Planning**. Now this is a phrase which many of us will not normally use, but it is one that has become more widely known as a way of describing how an organisation or institution would cope with, and come back from, an event or circumstances outside of their control. The word literally means *springing back from or rebounding*. The government has been keen to encourage public bodies and institutions, including the Church, to consider how they might deal with an emergency.



The possible events which we are meant to test our resilience planning against include dealing with an intruder in the building during a service or a sudden outbreak of fire. Even more concerning are references to far more cataclysmic events. These include extreme weather conditions such as hurricanes and the risk of flooding or even a minor earthquake. The worst case scenarios include a terrorist attack within our area or the warning of an imminent chemical, biological or nuclear attack! Many of us will have had our mobile phones activated last September as the government tested the public alert system which no longer comes from the air-raid siren on top of the police station in Uddingston, but will be carried through social media and telecommunication systems. All very cheery stuff!! (I don't think!)



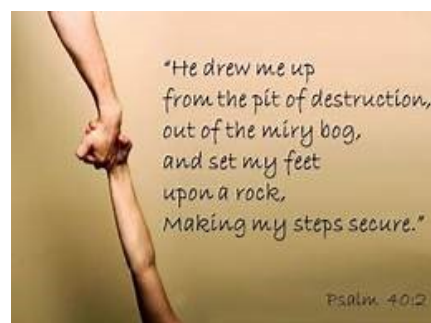
There are, of course, some events that we can plan for, and during the summer it is my intention to test the evacuation of our church building one Sunday morning to see how efficiently and safely it can be done. Other scenarios cannot really be easily planned for; in the event of an attack on our country by Russian nuclear missiles, we might well hope as believers that we would not survive, rather than face a bleak post-apocalyptic future.

The truth is that even in everyday life, we can all face events which come out of the blue, are extraordinary in their nature and, in truth, would be emotionally and spiritually difficult to deal with. Our resilience would be tested. An institution like the Church is made up of people, and we are all different in how we react to events and deal with them. What might for one be something that could be faced and worked through relatively easily, would for another be so traumatic that our lives would take a long time to recover and would leave emotional scars. A sudden illness or death; the loss of a job; a fire in our home; the list goes on. While not a cause for a public alert, they will test the strength of our character and, as Christians, be a test to our faith. How resilient are we?

Recently at our devotional reflections during the week, we were looking at the theme, **Dealing with Problems**. The passage that I chose was from Psalm 40, v 1-2.

I waited patiently for the Lord; He turned and heard my cry. He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; He set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand.

Psalm 40 v 1-2



These verses are at the beginning of a psalm written by David. We aren't told the context of the psalm, but as you read it, you can see that events were not easy for the writer. He refers to:

....troubles without number surround me, my sins have overtaken me. They are more than the hairs of my head and my heart fails within me. Psalm 40 v 12

It would appear that he has people round about him who want him dead and desire harm to befall him.

May all who want to take my life be put to shame and confusion....may those who say to me "Aha! Aha!" be appalled at their own shame. Psalm 40 v 14-15

The psalmist must have known a time when he had been in a literal, or metaphorical, pit and a place of mud and mire in order to be lifted up out of it. At the end of the psalm he offers a plea to God:

But as for me, I am poor and needy; may the Lord think of me. You are my help and my deliverer; you are my God, do not delay. Psalm 40 v 17

Whatever the circumstances he faces, it seems pretty dire and not something one would easily bounce back from or quickly deal with and recover. Yet in the midst of his lament, we also see clues as to how the man or woman of faith can be resilient and deal with, and recover from, the challenging events of life.



Firstly, the psalmist is clear who he needs to talk to about the situations he faces.

"I waited patiently for the Lord..." v 1. He does so with a confidence that the Lord will ***"hear my cry"***. Indeed, he speaks warmly about the many ***"..wonders you have done, the things you planned for us. None can compare with you; were I to speak and tell your deeds they would be too many to declare."***

v 5 Here is a man who knows his God! This is the vital key to dealing with the calamities of life. It starts, and ends, with how well we know God. If we, like the psalmist, have stored up in the barns of our hearts and minds a knowledge of the Lord, drawn from His Word and its outworking in our lives, then when some crisis emerges, we will be able to draw upon it so that we can face these new challenges with a desire and a confidence that first and foremost, we need to seek Him in them. The psalmist can testify to how the Lord ***"...set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand, He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God."*** **v 2b -3**

Knowing that from the past, enables him to face his present and future with a degree of hope and resilience.

I am sure that many of us who heard that moving testimony from Ukraine on Pentecost Sunday will have been encouraged by our sister in Christ, and her determination to face the realities of war with that God-centred trust and desire to get on with the work He had set before her and her colleagues. They too wait ***"patiently for the Lord"*** and firmly believe that He will hear ***"their cry"***!

Secondly, this confidence comes from a life given over to the Lord. He openly speaks of coming to the Lord; ***"Here I am, I have come...I desire to do your will, my God; your law is within my heart."*** **v 7-8**

Here is a man who has a close relationship with the Lord and seeks first His kingdom and His glory. Not that he is perfect. His sins are only too familiar to him, but above everything else, he desires to do God's will. We have to be honest and recognise that we all struggle with being whole-hearted in our allegiance to King Jesus, but that is the key to knowing His will and His purpose in our lives, even when things are difficult and challenging. Without that Lordship in our lives, we will be left in a fog of confusion, doubt and despair.



Lastly, he wants the Lord to be honoured and given glory by his testimony of God's faithfulness and care. His prayer is that ***"...many will see and fear the Lord and put their trust in Him"*** as he quite intentionally sets out to:

Proclaim your saving acts in the great assembly; I do not seal my lips, Lord, as you know. I do not hide your righteousness in my heart; I speak of your faithfulness and your saving help. I do not conceal your love and your faithfulness from the great assembly. v 9-10

Faced with a real crisis, his desire is that his resilience in the face of, and his ability to deal with it, will point to the God he trusts and cause others to put their faith in Him. Seeing a major crisis in our lives from the same perspective transforms something overwhelming to something that can be used for the good of others, and bring glory to our Heavenly Father. That is the key to being able to spring back and regroup from upsetting and unsettling events. I can personally testify to that. This perspective enables us to stand and face things, and having done all, to stand! As Paul the Apostle says:

God is strong and He wants you to be strong. Be prepared. You're up against far more than you can handle on your own. Take all the help you can get, every weapon that God has issued so that when it's all over bar the shouting, you'll still be on your feet. Ephesians 6 v 10-13 The Message

Let us test our resilience in the light of God's Word and the testimony of believers down through the ages; believers today who face war, famine, natural disaster and displacement. **WE** hear their prayer for us as it unites us with the psalmist who said:

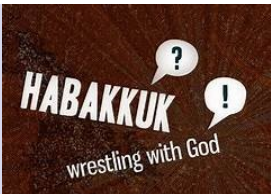
May all who seek You rejoice and be glad in You; may those who long for Your saving help always say, "The Lord is great!"

With prayerful best wishes

Un B r Bull

The minister will be on holiday from Tuesday 11 June—Tuesday 25 June 2024.

Dates for the Diary

Sunday 2 June	10.30am Communion Sunday Dipping into the Book of Habbakuk Pt 2 6pm United Service with Grace Church, Bothwell	
Sunday 16 June	Morning Service 10.30am Reflections on ministry among young people Led by Jessica, Ian and our young people	
Wednesday 26 June	Visit of our Church Partner, Joy McCrae Re-Fresh at 2pm in Church Hall	
Sunday 30 June – 9 August	Morning service 10.30am Summer Sunday Worship	
Sunday 18 August	Morning service 10.30am Back to School with God led by Elizabeth and Ian	
Sunday 1 September	Morning service 10.30am Harvest Thanksgiving Café Church Gifts in aid of Open Bible, Ukraine	

Children and Families' Worker Appeal

We invite you to prayerfully consider giving to our appeal to fund our Children and Families' Worker for the next two years. We want to help young people come to a committed faith in Jesus and to equip them to be Ambassadors for Christ, rooted in God's word and confident in their faith. We have seen the fruits of this ministry in the past and feel certain it is God's will that it should continue.



Background to the Post

Many of you will know the background, but for those that are new to the church, it might be helpful to rewind a few years. In 2015, many of our young people had grown up, left home for university or jobs or had simply no interest left in "things of the church". The lack of children and young people in our congregation had become a real concern and a matter of urgent prayer. Many in our congregation were becoming older and less able to serve in that capacity. The leadership of the church had the vision to employ a **Children and Families' Worker** on a part-time basis. We needed someone with youth and vigour on their side, qualities much needed when working with youngsters.

This vision was brought to the congregation who were asked to support it both financially and with prayer. The congregation embraced the concept with great enthusiasm and were overwhelming in their generosity and encouragement. We went ahead and advertised, interviewed and subsequently employed **Karen Stangoe** who remained in post till January 2023 when she moved to working with SU Scotland. **Andrew Robertson** stepped in to help us out for a few months before **Jessica Beecroft** took up the post in August 2023.

Park Kids grew during "the Stangoe years" thanks to Karen's enthusiasm and the energy and commitment she brought to the job. She was a true prayer warrior for the children. Through her work we were encouraged to see the numbers in Park Kids growing, but not just growing in number, we were blessed to see these children growing in their faith and understanding of God. We also saw relationships being built and developed with local schools, children with no faith background coming to MEGA, Connect and film afternoons as well as school workshops being held in the church at Christmas and Easter.

Why is it important for this Post to continue?

Jessica has now brought her own talents and fresh ideas to the post and she is building on the sure foundation that Karen established. She has a wonderful rapport with the kids on a Sunday morning and we see them continuing to grow in their knowledge of the Bible and their simple faith is heart-warming to see. We are now seeing the fruits of that vision from 2015 and are convinced that it is God's will that it should continue. We live in an age when the Christian faith is marginalised, ridiculed and ignored. Most children in main-stream schooling hear little about God, and even less about Jesus, so it is important that we keep activities like MEGA and Connect going, as well as the church-run events like Christmas Unwrapped and the Easter Code so that our children have the opportunity to hear the Good News for themselves.

Whitney Houston sang, "I believe children are our future, teach them well and let them lead the way", a modern version perhaps of **Proverbs 22 v 6**.

Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.

It is important that our children learn that God loves them and is with them in their day-to-day lives. We must teach our children the ways of Jesus. If only our youngsters were taught to love and respect others from a young age, the world might be a kinder place! Knowing Jesus is their ever-present friend will boost their confidence and help them when they feel alone or rejected by others. They will remember that there is a God who loves them unconditionally and who is powerful enough to rescue them from any situation. The seeds, sown when they are young, will take root and flourish and they will grow into mature Christian adults who will then teach the next generation! Generational theology at its best!



How do we ensure that Park Church will still be here for future generations?

Sometimes people quote verses like the following when faced with a problem, as if we don't have a part to play! This is wrong.

My God will meet all your needs according to the riches of His Glory in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4 v 19

Although we share Paul's confidence, this verse does not mean we should be complacent as if God will do it all without us. In reality, God meets the needs of His people through the **giving** of His people and we are to be partners with Him. We are very much part of His plan to ensure that the youth ministry continues at Park for future generations.

So what is our role in this? First of all we can:

1. PRAY

- We need to pray for Jessica and her team: for wisdom, energy and discernment
- We need to pray for the children that they will grow and stand firm in the faith
- We need to reflect and prayerfully consider what gift we are able to give

2. GIVE FINANCIALLY

Why do we give? Generosity is at the heart of our faith. We believe in a generous God who sent His own Son for our salvation. As Christians everything we have comes from God and we are just stewards of these gifts. Our own generosity is a testament and hallmark of our faith in action. There are some biblical principles to guide us in our giving. Our giving should be:

- **Cheerful** - 2 Corinthians 9 v 7
- **Regular** - 1 Corinthians 16 v 2
- **Planned** - 1 Corinthians 16 v 2
- **Sacrificial** - 2 Samuel 24 v 24
- **In proportion** - 1 Corinthians 16 v 2



We would like to ask you to prayerfully consider financially supporting this work for the next **two years**, *if you are able*, **from the 1 August 2024**. We need to raise around **£12,000 per annum** to cover all our costs (salary, NI and pension contributions) for a part-time post of 2.5 days per week.

(We had asked you to stop/pause your Standing Orders two years ago as we had enough money to fund the post but now the well is beginning to run dry and we need to make this new appeal.)

If you feel led to support this work financially, please fill in the pledge form (there will be a supply in the hall and at the front door of the church) and place it in the sealed envelope in the **PLEDGE BOX** in the hall. All donations are kept anonymous. If you are a UK taxpayer and can **Gift Aid** your donation, please tick the box on the form. It makes such a difference as it boosts the gift by 25%!

All pledge forms should be returned by **30 June 2024**. Once all the pledges are in, we will write to everyone who has pledged with confirmation and details of how to set up the **Standing Order**.

We thank you for your support in the past and look forward to you supporting this important Kingdom work again.

Giving is as much an act of worship as prayer and song and is a gift and privilege from God. We want to pay forward the blessings we have received, and sow and invest in our church so that future generations may reap the blessings to come.



Park Church Photo Album – A Year of Ministry!

In May 2023, Park Pages featured photos taken at different points through the year. A year on, here are some photo memories from the autumn, winter and spring.

It was Park Church's turn to host the uniformed organisations, families and friends from the community at November's Remembrance Service. A matter of weeks later, we celebrated Christmas. Our young people led us in reflection on the birth of the Messiah through readings and a Nativity Play; Janice and her husband Leon contributed music at the Watchnight Service; Janet Gray did a magnificent job of helping us reflect on the names of Jesus through her artwork in the hall.



Our last Sunday service of 2023 was café-church style. Of course, it wouldn't be Uddingston without some Tunnocks' biscuits! The church was beautifully decorated for Holy Week in March, and on Maundy Thursday we remembered the Last Supper by trying something new: a fish and chip supper, followed by worship and communion.





March also saw **Bruce and Elizabeth's 25th anniversary at Park Church**. We had a cake-cutting ceremony in church. So far, food seems to have become a recurring theme!

The fellowship groups met regularly throughout the period, but sadly, adults are much more elusive in photos than children and young people. Out with the cameras, fellowship groups...!

Jessica Beecroft started work as Children and Families' Worker at the end of the summer and flung herself into Park Tots, Park Kids, Park Teens, Connect and Mega as well as SU Groups. We hope some of the young people will take part in a service in June to share what they have learned.



Looks like it's been a fun-filled year at Park and we thank Elizabeth McDowall for putting this collage of photos together to remind us of God's goodness to us.

Books of the New Testament

As we conclude our series on the Books of the New Testament, we reflect on the entire 66 Books of the Bible which tell one cohesive story of redemption, beginning with the creation of the world and man and concluding with graphic, prophetic visions and a depiction of the end times in the Book of Revelation. The Bible culminates with the eternal reign of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, promising eternal life to those who have put their trust in Jesus and eternal separation from God for those who have rejected Him.

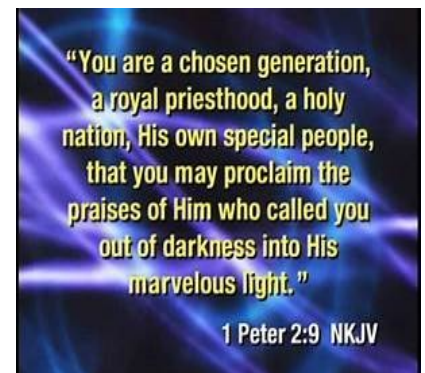


1 Peter

This letter was written by the Apostle Peter at the end of the first century. Peter's aim was to encourage the early Christians, dispersed throughout the world, who were facing persecution and suffering. He reminds them that Christ himself experienced the same. He reminds them of their identity in Christ and the future inheritance that awaits them if they hold fast to the faith.

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light.

1 Peter 2 v 9

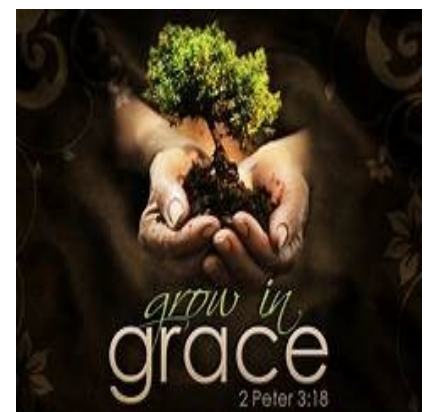


2 Peter

This letter is written by Peter before his imminent death. He explains why Christ's return hasn't yet happened but reassures the Christians that God is very much in control. He warns against false teachers who seek to cause division in the church for their own gain.

Therefore, dear friends, since you have been forewarned, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of the lawless and fall from your secure position. But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To Him be glory both now and forever! Amen

2 Peter 3 v 17-18



1 John

This letter was written by the Apostle John at the end of the first century. John encourages believers to be loving towards one another and not to be led astray by people saying Jesus was false. He sets out to defend the divinity of Jesus as the eternal Son of God. Jesus' death on the cross, and his sacrifice for us, is the type of love that we should try and emulate. People will recognise us as believers if we keep Jesus' commands and love one another.

See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know Him.

1 John 3 v 1



2 John

This letter by John is brief as it is believed he hoped to visit the church in the near future. John wrote this letter to urge believers to embrace unity in love and to avoid all false teachers. The book is divided into a reminder, warning and instruction.

Watch out that you do not lose what we have worked for, but that you may be rewarded fully. Anyone who runs ahead and does not continue in the teaching of Christ does not have God; whoever continues in the teaching has both the Father and the Son.

2 John 1 v 8-9

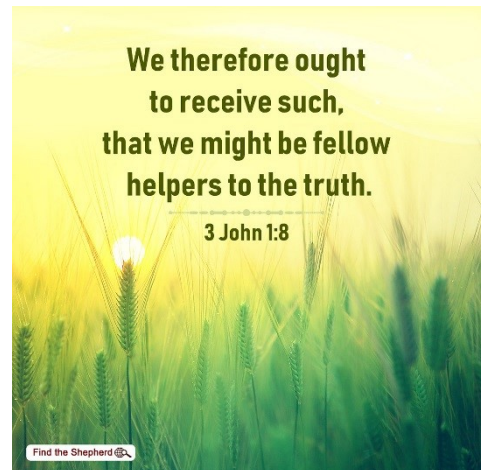


3 John

This is another short letter, again comprising only of one chapter, and written to Gaius as a personal greeting. Again, John hopes to visit him soon so keeps the letter brief. Gaius is commended for his exemplary faith which is contrasted with a church leader called Diotrephes whose behaviour, John warns, is not to be imitated. The book encourages hospitality to travelling Christian teachers and Christian fellowship.

It gave me great joy when some believers came and testified about your faithfulness to the truth, telling how you continue to walk in it. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.

3 John 1 v 3-4



Jude

This letter, written by Jude, is thought to have been written to Jewish Christians. It is filled with vivid imagery and anger towards apostasy and false teachers. It is written in very poetic prose. Jude encourages Christians to contend for the faith, attacking false teachers who have infiltrated the Christian community.

To Him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you before His glorious presence without fault and with great joy—to the only God our Saviour be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forever more! Amen.

Jude 1 v 24-25

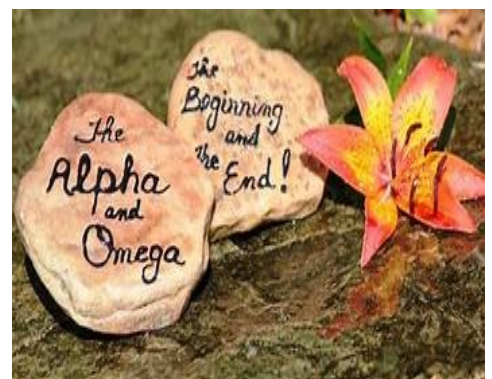


Revelation

This is the most literary book of the Bible, full of poetry and symbolism. It depicts mysterious visions of the heavenly realm as well as the cataclysmic events to strike the earth before all God's enemies are destroyed. A new heaven and a new earth will be revealed to the followers of Christ.

Look, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to each person according to what they have done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.

Revelation 22 v 12-13



Come let us sing for joy to the Lord!



There can be few amongst us who have not questioned God at one time or other in our lives. God's plans are often beyond our human understanding, and when bad things happen we become discouraged and lose faith. These songs remind us of this verse in Romans 8: "And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose". God is working for our good even in the midst of our suffering and is always in control. These songs encourage us to focus on Jesus and to keep on praying, trusting and believing.

God Moves in a Mysterious Way

This old hymn was written by **William Cowper** in 1773 and was originally written as a poem entitled, *Light shining out of darkness*. Cowper's proclamation that God is mysterious and unknowable comes from a man who struggled to accept that God's salvation extended to him, although at the same time he felt drawn to God.

In a biography of Cowper, John Piper describes Cowper's life as "one long accumulation of pain", especially mental pain. Cowper suffered from depression which led him to attempt suicide on several occasions. However, he was never successful and eventually died from dropsy, aged 69. He became a believer in 1764 during a stay at an asylum. He came across a bible on a bench in the garden, and God used John 11 and Romans 3 v 25 to help Cowper recognise the goodness, grace and mercy of Jesus and the sufficiency of his atoning work on the cross.

The hymn portrays God as the creator who is present in all parts of nature, but a creator who continues to interact with his creation. When the believer is faced with difficult circumstances, Cowper tries to convey the message that even things that seem disastrous to us, can be used by God to bring us grace and life; in verse 3, the clouds that we see as full of turmoil actually rain down mercy and blessings on us.

The hymn covers the themes of God's goodness, sovereignty and wisdom; the reader is to take courage and to put their trust in God. Many answers to the age-old questions like, "If God is good, why does He allow suffering?", will not be answered this side of eternity. God will explain everything in His own time and we need to put our faith in a powerful, yet merciful, God and trust that He works all things together for His glory and our good.



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|--|---|
| 1. God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform;
He plants his footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm. | 2. Deep in unfathomable mines,
Of never failing skill;
He treasures up his bright designs,
And works his sovereign will. |
| 3. Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take,
The clouds ye so much dread;
Are big with mercy, and shall break
In blessings on your head. | 4. Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust him for his grace;
Behind a frowning providence,
He hides a smiling face. |
| 5. His purposes will ripen fast,
Unfolding ev'ry hour;
The bud may have a bitter taste,
But sweet will be the flow'r. | 6. Blind unbelief is sure to err,
And scan his work in vain;
God is his own interpreter,
And he will make it plain. |

To listen to the hymn click [here](#).

All Things

This song was released by **Sovereign Grace** in April 2024 and is one of the songs on their album, **Knowing God**, due out this July, and based on J I Packer's book of the same name published in 1973. Many of us grew up reading this book in the 70s and 80s and Sovereign Grace felt it would be a rich resource for songs that connect the head and heart. To quote their director, Bob Kauflin:

"Good theology always leads to glad doxology. Knowing God isn't simply a book to read. It's songs waiting to be sung."

The song, **All Things**, is based on Romans 8 v 28-30 and covers the themes of Election, Faithfulness of God, God's Promises, His Sovereignty and God's presence with us through all things. It is a simple song that reflects this section from Chapter 12 in the book, **The Love of God**.

As believers, we find in the cross of Christ assurance that we, as individuals, are beloved of God; "the Son of God....loved me and gave himself for me" (Gal 2 v 20). Knowing this, we are able to apply to ourselves the promise that all things work together for good to them that love God and are called according to His purpose (Romans 8 v 28).

Sometimes we find it hard to accept that God allows bad things to happen to us and question His actions. It is helpful, therefore, to have songs that explore this theme and allow our questioning and acknowledge that sometimes our hearts grow cold. Sovereign Grace write:

In the midst of tragedy, loss and defeat, it's not uncommon to question the power, goodness and wisdom of God. But Scripture affirms both good and evil are under the control of a sovereign God who holds us in his loving and almighty hands. J I Packer said it this way:

All things work together for good to them that love God and are called according to his purpose (Romans 8 v 28). Not just some things, note, but all things! Every single thing that happens to us expresses God's love to us, and comes to us for the furthering of God's purposes for us.

This song reminds us of those precious truths, and assures us that God has ordained everything in our past, present and future for his endless glory and our eternal joy.

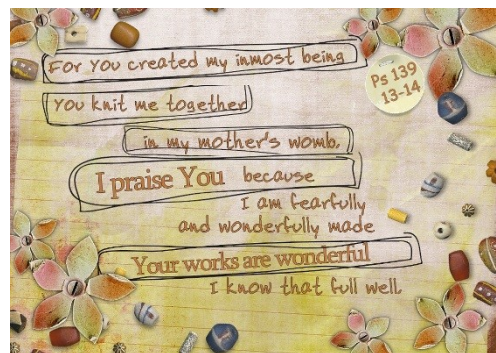
The last verse points to the faithfulness of God in all things, even to the end.

1. When my heart was cold and lifeless
And I wandered in my blindness
You pursued me
And before the world was breathing
You had chosen to redeem me
For You loved me, Lord You love me

Chorus

*I know You are working
You are working all things
All things for Your glory and my good
Lord, You will accomplish
Everything You promised
All things for Your glory and my good*

2. Though the enemy is mighty
And a thousand fall beside me
You defend me
When the wilderness seems endless
And I feel the weight of darkness
You are with me, You are with me
3. Till the day You come in power
Or I reach my final hour
You will keep me
You're the author of my story
You are faithful, You are for me
I will praise You, I will praise You



To listen to the song,
click [here](#).

All Things Work Together for Good

(Three important truths in Romans 8 v 28)

After writing about the two songs on the previous pages, which are based on Romans 28 v 8, I came across this devotional by Lori Hatcher, a Christian blogger and author, and thought it might be helpful to share it.



Romans 8 v 28 is one of the most memorized and quoted verses in the New Testament:

“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.”

This Scripture brings comfort, direction, and hope to Christians every day. Sadly, it's also one of the most misquoted and misunderstood verses in the Bible. Therefore, I'd like to share three things about this popular verse you may never have noticed.

First, Romans 8 v 28 includes loving God and being called to His purpose

To understand the truth of this scripture quote, we can't just quote the part of the verse we like:

“And we know that in all things God works for the good...”

and skip the rest,

“of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.”

Romans 8 v 28 is a promise for believers. Real believers. Those who are living for Christ. Not those who claim to believe in God but are living like the devil.

This verse says to those who love God and are doing their best to obey his commands,

“Even though bad/sad/evil/wicked things will touch your life, I (God) will use them to ultimately bring about good, both in your life and in the world.”

Joni Eareckson Tada, an inspirational speaker, author, and singer, is a quadriplegic who has been confined to a wheelchair for more than 40 years. When people ask her why God allows suffering, she often says,

“God allows what he hates, to accomplish what he loves.”

And what does God love? For people to enter into a relationship with himself and become more like him. Joni's life and ministry are a stunning testimony of how God can use a tragedy like a paralyzing diving accident to impact the lives of millions.



Second, Romans 8 v 28 doesn't mean all things will be good.

No matter how rose-coloured our glasses are, there's nothing good about cancer, sex trafficking, or death. Until Jesus returns and conquers Satan once and for all, sin will continue to drag its poisonous tentacles across our world, damaging and destroying everything in its wake.

The truth of Romans 8 v 28 reminds us that although sin and Satan are powerful, God is more powerful; He is able to redeem and restore anything for our good and his glory.



All things may not be good, but God can and will use all things for good.

Third, the importance of the verse following Romans 8 v 28

“For those God foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers” (Romans 8 v 29).

A wise Bible teacher once told me,

“God allows everything into our lives for one of two purposes—either to bring us into a relationship with himself or, if we already know him, to make us more like His Son.”

My friend Billy was diagnosed with a brain tumour at age 35. Billy played college baseball, married his sweetheart, and fathered two handsome sons. Convinced of the truth of Romans 8 v 28 and 29, he chose to believe God had a good plan for his bad cancer.

Because Billy believed God could use even something as destructive as a brain tumour, he responded in faith and trust.

“Even though this is not what I planned for my life,” he told his family, “I trust God to use it for good.”

His unshakeable faith and peace were so profound that church leaders asked him to share his story at a men’s event.

Billy agreed. Then he invited his younger brother, Jack, to go with him. Jack had never accepted any of Billy’s invitations to go to church, but this time, he said yes.

When Billy finished telling his story, the pastor invited attendees to come forward if they wanted to know how to have a relationship with God. Jack was the first person out of his seat.

“I’ve always thought Billy’s faith was a crutch,” Jack said, “but watching him go through three surgeries, chemotherapy, and radiation made me realize what he had was real. And I wanted it.”

Billy didn’t survive his battle with cancer, but because he chose to respond in faith and trust, many people, including his younger brother, came to know Jesus Christ as their Saviour. Billy’s cancer wasn’t good, but God used it for good to make him more like Christ and to draw others into a faith relationship with himself.

We find perhaps the greatest comfort of Romans 8 v 28 in the first three words,

“And we know.”

Adrian Rogers, in the Billy Graham training seminar, **Rising Above Your Circumstances**, said,

“This is not conjecture, this is not happenstance, this is not perhaps, this is not maybe; this is ironclad certainty. ‘We know that all things work together for good.’”

As long as we live in this world, people will attempt to reconcile God’s sovereignty with humanity’s suffering. Verses like Romans 8 v 28 assure us that no suffering is wasted, and God is always at work for our good and his glory. When we cannot comprehend why trials come and struggle to imagine that anything good can come from them, we can rest in the security that God is in control.

Because of this, we can have hope.

Prayer to Trust in God and the Promise of Romans 8 v 28

Father, sometimes I can’t understand how you can bring beauty from the ashes of my life. I struggle to trust you with the broken pieces. You say in your Word that without faith it is impossible to please you, and I want to please you. I want to trust you. I want you to make me more like Jesus and use my trials for my good and your glory. Help me believe the promise of Romans 8 v 28. In the strong name of Jesus, I ask. Amen

The article first appeared on Crosswalk.com and is used with permission. Connect with Lori at LoriHatcher.com.

"All Things Work Together For Good" Romans 8:28 Meaning Explained (crosswalk.com)



Grow Uddingston Update

Donald Burt



Spring (and maybe even Summer) is finally here!

After a very cold, wet and miserable April, the weather seems to have suddenly improved significantly; long may it continue!

Due to the cold weather, everything was very slow to start growing in March and April. However, with the daffodils and then the Spring plants making an appearance, followed by the recent warmer and drier weather, everything seems to have caught up, suddenly resulting in lots of colour!

Although it is a little too early to put in bedding plants, we have been working at the Gateway, getting the back and front flowerbeds in to shape, with some early season colour appearing. We don't necessarily get the same plants displaying in the same way every year; this year some azaleas that were planted a couple of years ago provided a beautiful purple display. Maybe the spent coffee granules, provided by Angels, which can be used for more acid-loving plants, made the difference!

We haven't been able to do as much early season work at the railway station this year, as the major construction work involving two lifts and a new bridge has been on-going. The project is scheduled to be completed in July and we are in discussion with Scotrail and the construction contractors, Story, to see what landscaping can be put in place that would be best suited for all.

We have lost most of the banking that was formed by ourselves some years ago; however we hope that we will gain some other areas towards the end of the project.

Some of our group participated in the recent **Keep Scotland Beautiful** "Spring Clean" litter event and our Litter Picking group continue to do great work to improve our local area.



We also recently had many young volunteers from **Muiredge Primary** participate in a litter pick event, collecting 14 bags of rubbish around the Crofthead Park area.



We have just had our **Annual Plant Sale** (Saturday 11 May) outside **Park Church** which was very successful. Almost all the plants (supplied by Rosebank Garden Centre) were sold on the day, with many orders also being taken for hanging baskets and display pots. Thank you to Bruce and all at **Park Church** for their help and support during this event, and special thanks to the Ladies' Association for providing Tea, Coffee and cakes during the event.

Unfortunately, due to financial cutbacks, the Council will not be placing any hanging baskets on the lamp posts on the Main Street this year, as well as some flowerbeds being grassed over. We have tried to work quickly to mitigate this situation and have managed to secure sponsorship for some of the lamp post baskets.



On a brighter note, the planters, tubs and hanging baskets that we organise will be on display as normal this summer and they will be in place by the end of May. Then it definitely will be summer....!



God in the Seasons

While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease. **Genesis 8 v 22**

God in the Seasons



Lord,

In Spring, we are reminded of the magnificence of Your creation, as the earth is covered in verdant green, with splendid splashes of color, and we witness birth everywhere, of animals bearing their young, of buds turning into leaves and flowers and our own moods being reborn with renewed energy and life.

Lord,

In Summer, we remember the warmth of Your love for us and the light of Your goodness. Both are everywhere for those who look. Thank You for butterflies, birds and wildlife for us to enjoy, water to swim in, and weather that frees us to romp and play while outdoor pleasures are at their peak.

Lord,

In Fall, we thank you for Your cooling breezes, that bring relief from the relentless summer heat. We see bright colors fading and dying, leaves turning brown, crisp, disintegrating, only to be reborn next year, reminding us that every living thing, including us, must die in some way before being reborn.

Lord,

In Winter, as white snow blankets the ground, we are reminded of Your purity and Your perfection. The complexity and beauty of each single snowflake only hints at Your transcendent intelligence and creativity. We hunker down and snuggle in, knowing this season will wind down and Spring will reappear, as it always has because You created an orderly, predictable universe, not by chance, but from your flawless design.

**Thank You for the seasons, Lord
and everything in them
that You created for our enjoyment.**

By Joanna Fuchs



Autumn



Winter





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