



New Life Christian Community

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come." 2 Cor 5:17

Sunday, September 12, 2021

Vol. 14, Issue 48

PASTORAL PONDERING

WHAT MAN MEANT FOR EVIL, GOD MEANT FOR GOOD

Most of us know the story. Young Joseph, the favorite son with a coat to prove it, is sold into slavery at the hands of unjust men. The sin against Joseph seems especially heinous because it is at the hands of not just any "men" - but by his own brothers - his family.

After having been sold into slavery Joseph's woes are far from over. He is, at the hands of wicked men and women and, as Chapters 37-41 of Genesis record, subjected to episode after episode of abuse and pain.

But in chapters 42-50 we see the drama change. We begin to see that good would come from the difficulties that Joseph had been subjected to. Not only would Joseph's family be preserved during a time of famine, but many nations would also be fed and blessed through this descendant of Abraham (sounds like the first-fruits of the fulfillment of Genesis 12:3). The book that began with the fall of mankind comes to a fitting end with Joseph's glorious and infamous statement, "*As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good.*" (Genesis 50:20)

How many of us could echo Joseph's words when we go through hardship? How many of us truly believe that 'what man means for evil, God means for good'? It is easy to say, but it is another thing to believe it. It seems to me, that more often than not, we believe only a hollow and ankle-deep version of Joseph's words.

Perhaps you are reading this and think that I'm wrong about you - you profess, 'I *do* actually believe Joseph's words to be true today!' Before you stop reading, hear me out. The subject matter here may eventually drive some readers to stop reading, but don't stop yet.

Let's see how Joseph's principle is illustrated in 1 Chronicles. David was rising to power as God's anointed king. By chapter 21, David rises to such a place of power that he begins to allow earthly power and wisdom to cloud his vision. David begins to trust in his numbers rather than the Lord. So much so, that 1 Chronicles 21:1 says, "*Then Satan stood against Israel and incited David to number Israel.*"

In quoting this text, I've opened a potential can of worms - because every reader now wonders, 'Why was it such an evil for David to number Israel?' Humor me...let's leave aside that question for another Pastoral Pondering. Let's focus on the fact that what David did was evil. He was acting at Satan's inciting. Clearly David was sinning in numbering Israel. Now, let's hold this thought for a moment and go back to Joseph's statement.

What man meant for evil, God meant for good.

Typically, what we mean by this statement is - What man did in an evil way, God will turn it around and make everything alright. In other words, we view the sentiment of Genesis 50:20 as - God will clean up the mess, undo the mess, get us out of the evil mess that we were put into by evil and unjust men and turn it into something different - something good. We apply Joseph's statement to David's situation by expecting that at some point (down the road) God would get involved and change our circumstances and clean up the mess.

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But, as optimistic as those statements are, that is not what Genesis 50:20 says. Notice that when we say “God meant” it puts God at the start of the episode as well as at the end (it does not say “What man meant for evil, God will turn it around eventually for good”). What was *meant* for evil God *meant* for good. - in other words, God was not merely responding *after* the failure - He was actually present and functioning as the Sovereign God at the start too. He *meant* it for good.

Now, at the risk of whiplash, let’s go back to David’s numbering of Israel. The author of Chronicles is not the only one who records this “numbering” incident in David’s life. In 2 Samuel 24 we read of this same episode. So, let’s read the parallel verse of David being incited to number Israel. 2 Samuel 24:1 says, *“The anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he incited David against them, saying “Go, number Israel and Judah.”*

Did you catch that? Who exactly incited David to number Israel? Because, according to 1 Chronicles - it was Satan. But according to 2 Samuel, it was the Lord!

This clear contrast illustrates what Joseph knew to be true. God was working from the start to do something according to His good will and pleasure. While it is true - that often man has evil intent, we can, by faith, proclaim that it is equally true that God has orchestrated our circumstances from the start for *His good*. We may be tempted to blame Satan (and he is often involved), but we must never forget that God is also at work - and He means all of this for His good!

He has you where you are - for His good. It really is true that what man meant for evil, God meant for good.

The greatest example of this principle is found in another Son who was, like Joseph, His father’s favorite. But unlike Joseph, His garment was not of many colors. Though it was colored - not by the blood of a lamb, but by His own blood. Who, at the hands of unjust brethren, was sold into the hands of wicked men - who nailed Him to a tree. Jesus Christ proves beyond a shadow of a doubt that even in the most wicked situation, God is brilliantly meaning it for good. The Lord had been orchestrating all that would take place in the events of the cross for His good from the very start of time - all even before He planted the tree of life. The cross was what God meant for good - that all the nations of the earth would be blessed.

How much more is it true for each of us - that our Sovereign King is the Author and Perfector of our faith. He knows what you are going through. That does not mean that what you may be going through isn’t difficult (we hardly could come to that conclusion when the cross is the quintessential example), but it does mean that the weight of God’s glorious good somehow far outweighs these momentary afflictions. Rest and trust in Him, remembering that what man means for evil, God means for good. Entrust yourself to the Sovereign King who is

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This Week's Scheduled Events:

Tues	Men's Bible Study- 6:30 am
Tues	Women's Precepts- 6:30-8:00 pm
Wed	Every Man's Battle- 6:00 am
Wed	Immerse Classes- 6:15-7:30 pm
Thurs	Men's Bible Study- 6:30 am
Thurs	Ladies Study- 10:00 am
Thurs	Ladies Bible Study- 12:00 pm
Thurs	Ladies Study- 6:30 pm
Thurs	GriefShare- 6:30 pm (Adults & Youth meet separately)

September Memory Verse:

Galatians 5:13

"For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another." ESV

September Fellowship Tip:

What have you been reading in the Word lately that has ministered to you? Share a post on connect about that or make sure to bring it up in conversation to encourage someone today with the Word.

Sunday Meals and Fellowship:

Sep 12	Meal Team #1
Sep 19	Meal Team #2
Sep 26	Meal Team #3

Contact Barbara Judkins if interested in being on a meal team or a helper.

Check out New Life Online
newlifechristiancommunity.org

- **Young Adults:** The gathering for young adults (high school to college & career) is starting back up after taking a break for the past few weeks! We will be meeting at 3 Arrows Coffee at **1pm today**.
- **Immerse Teacher Meeting:** There will be a meeting for all Immerse teachers to discuss the final details **Sunday, (TODAY) after service**. We will meet in the large classroom to the side of the kitchen, please go through the line & bring your lunch to the meeting. I hope to begin **promptly at 11:45am**.
- **Immerse Family Studies:** Wednesday Night Immerse Classes begin **this Wednesday 6:15 pm to 7:30 pm** here at the building. There is a class for everyone. Looking forward to another season of Wednesday evenings with the gathered body studying, praying, and fellowshiping together.

welcome

If you are a visitor this morning or have only been coming to New Life for a few months we are glad you are joining with us! If you would like to learn more about New Life, be sure to stop by the Resource Center in the front foyer to pick up a welcome bag we have for you. Please join us for fellowship after service today. We would love to meet and get to know you and for you to get to know us more.

Busy Bags
Available by the Door

Greeting Card Ministry

Do you know someone that needs encouragement, support, or celebration? Please remember that New Life has a ministry just for that! Contact Lynn with your request via email: lynnjimmnelson@gmail.com or call her cell at 651-373-1426.

PASTORAL PONDERING

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working all things *"for the good of those who are called according to His purpose."* (Romans 8:28)

Let our circumstances be swallowed up in His victory. A victory that was planned from the very beginning.

Blessings,
Pastor Tony



Today's Passage:
Pastor Jeff's message is from the
Old Testament book,
PSALM 2

Sermon Notes: