

Fanning it into Flame
Sunday, June 06, 2010
God is Always Good

I ministered in the prison for years and I would often hear an inmate start a testimony with, "God is good." It would immediately be followed with the rest of the inmates responding, "All the time." Then he would say, "And all the time," with the inflection in his voice anticipating the response: "God is good." This concept is essential to our spiritual health. We face trials and temptations all the time and can sometimes wonder why God is not using his omnipotence to lighten our load. We can think that if we were God and had all the power to do anything we wanted we would certainly use that power to make things easier for our children. This is a dangerous meditation because it assumes that God is not doing things in our best interest. It questions his nature. I have a little phrase I use that says, "We need to take what we know to lead us through what we don't know or understand." We know that God is good and loving because he demonstrated it in the most sacrificial way: by sending his own son to die in our place, paying the penalty for our sins, and giving us the free gift of eternal life. You can't escape that fact. It's the truth. If God did this for us while we were still sinners, how much more will he do for us as his children?

The Apostle Paul wrote 13 of the 27 books of the New Testament and four of them were from prison, namely, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon. He could have easily questioned God and thrown himself a pity party, but he didn't. In 2 Corinthians 1 he calls God, the father of compassion and the God of all comfort. He goes on to say that God comforts us so we in turn can comfort others with the same comfort we have received. He had such a practical way of looking at things. Then he goes on to describe the most difficult situation in which he thought his life was in jeopardy only to come up with the conclusion that this happened so he would not rely upon himself, but upon God who raises the dead. Wow! What godly perspective. He was not a day-dreamer. He was a man of God who understood that our trust in God is what gets us through. God is our help in time of need. He is always faithful! He never lies. He never has a bad day. He is always the same. He never changes. You can always count on him because that's just the way he is. It is his nature. He can't be something he's not. He is love and as such is always good.

When things are going tough our faith/trust must remain strong and unwavering on this critical point. Don't allow negative things to change your perspective. It is our faith in this loving God that will get us through. The Apostle Paul told Timothy in his second letter chapter four, *"But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry. 6 For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day-- and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing."* After telling about a few people that did him harm he said, *"But the Lord stood at my side and gave me strength, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. And I was delivered from the lion's mouth. 18 The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen."*

May God bless us to maintain the same resolve in order to bring him all glory and honor and praise.