

We Don't Understand Yet, But We Will!

Do you know what is a hard thing to do? It is to let someone do a job *their way*. I learned that when my boys got old enough to mow the lawn. I remember when I got to that age. I was excited. It was like a rite of passage into adulthood. So when my boys were old enough, I was excited. I taught them about the mower, how to start it, put gas in it, keep your feet away from the bottom of it, and so on. I use to have a half acre of lawn to mow, so I told them how I would mow it. I had it down to a science. I would break it up into these sections and mow each section separately. I would start here, move there, trim this first, and so on.

Then I watched them mow. And they didn't do it the way I did. They started over here instead of over there. They broke it up into different sections. They didn't even touch the riding mower, but used the gas powered push mower which took longer. They were doing it all wrong. But you know what? When they got done, it looked just as nice and clean as when I did it. My wife thought it looked better! And who could say that my way was the best way or the only way?

That's how I feel right. I am having a tough time letting God do his job his way. This is not how I would have done it. Why take a 34 year old wife and mother of two to heaven, and leave a 99 year old woman in the nursing home suffering from Alzheimer's? I would have left Katie here and taken the other woman. I know God is God. I know he is almighty and knows all things. I know he is pure love and anything he does is based on that love. But I am having a tough time letting God do his job his way and not my. I know I am not the only one who feels that way.

So I ask God what he is up to, and he answers me, not in a vision, but in the Bible. Jesus speaks to us this morning and his words are found in John chapter 13" ***Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand."***

There are other things we don't understand. We are in the season of Lent leading up to Easter. Maybe we are accustomed to hearing the story, but it doesn't make sense. Yes, God sent his Son, Jesus, into the world in the flesh and blood. We can't understand how a God who is bigger than the universe can be confined to a human body. We don't understand it, but it is true.

And then God let Jesus go through all sorts of suffering. They arrested him, beat him, mocked him, whipped him, beat him some more and then crucified him. If someone did that to one of my sons, I wouldn't stand by watching; I'd do something about it. But God stood by and did nothing. I don't understand that. And look at Jesus. Why didn't he defend himself? He could have called down 6,000 angels to defend him, but he didn't. With one word he could have incinerated those bullies, but he didn't. That doesn't make sense.

That is why Jesus spoke those words from John 13. He spoke them Maundy Thursday, just hours before his crucifixion and all the suffering leading up to it. He knew his disciples wouldn't understand what was going to happen the next three days. Even after his resurrection they didn't understand. But they did later. They did finally understand why, so God can save sinners like you and me. You see, God wants us in heaven, and he wants to forgive us our sins so we can be in heaven. But forgiveness can only happen if somebody has pays for it. If I accidentally ran over your mailbox, maybe you would be kindhearted and tell me to forget about it, but someone has to pay for it like you. If we paid for our sin, we would be condemned to an eternity in hell. So God pays for it. Jesus paid for it with his death on the cross. Now we get it, don't we? We understand why God stood by and did nothing, and why Jesus didn't resist. He wanted to pay for our sins so God can forgive us.

It is starting to make some sense. Take Katie, for example. Why now? I don't know. We don't understand. We can take guesses. I think one of you said that God could have taken Katie 10 years ago when she had a similar incident, but gave her that time so she could get married and have children. Maybe God saw something in the future and is sparing her of that. We don't know, we don't understand.

But here is one thing we can understand. We heard it in our Romans reading earlier. In it we have that well know passage, ***"God works EVERYTHING out for the good of those who love him."*** But notice there is a comma there. What good is he working out? The fact he wants us in heaven, so he looked into the future, saw us, worked things out so we may believe and be found not guilty of our sins before God, and eventually glorified in heaven. We understand Katie is home in heaven. She is glorified. And God kept his promise to her. As he said, nothing will separate us from his love. We may not understand why now and not later, but he kept his promise to her. Think about it. Every day I pray for my family, especially that God keeps them safe from harm and danger. We you don't have to worry about Katie anymore. She is safe in heaven.

But one more thing we may not understand now, but will later is us. Where do you go from here? Yes, Katie is glorified in heaven. We praise God for that. But his decision to take her now means more work for you. The Lord promises to take care of you, but how? I don't know, but it doesn't matter what I know or don't know. What matters is God knows how. Trust him when he says in Matthew 6 not to worry about tomorrow. Hold onto his promise he is working it out for your good. We don't know how you will get through it, but when you look back, you will understand that by the grace of God he has kept his promise for you.

"Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand." We do not realize right now what God is doing. It is hard to see God's love through the clouds of sadness. But you know what? The sun still shines on cloudy days. We know it is there even though we can't see it. That is faith, being sure of what we hope for and certain of what

we can't see. Though we don't understand what he is doing, we know he is doing out of love and for our good. Trust him. And a day will come when we, with all believers, stand around the throne of God, then we will understand fully. Amen.