

Los Altos Church of Christ

*"...being of the same mind, maintaining the same love,
united in spirit, intent on one purpose." Philippians 2:2*

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This Sunday...Stuck In Wintertime

Wintertime can feel like an inactive season of life. Bears hibernate. Birds migrate. Growth seems absent. However, wintertime holds a secret. Winter is a season where deep growth and restoration take place. Roots grow deeper, form stronger, and become more connected during this season. This preparation allows for great beauty in the springtime and sweet fruit in the summer. This week Max circles back to Esther 4:14 to close out this series with some important lessons.

PRAYERS *Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:6-7*

- Terrie's brother Ernie was released from the hospital yesterday and entered a rehab facility to regain his strength. His daughter said the transformation and improvement have been amazing.

Continue to pray for John and Jennifer...Tim's recovery... Roger Townsend... Berry... Jeff's mother... Jene's hand...Christine's mother... Allen Sawyers...The Britton Family ... Barbara... Gwen and her son Caleb... Emmy Creswick... Jene's friend, Jim Thorpe... Lu...City of Children... Healing Hands International... Japhet's work in Zimbabwe...and New Hope Uganda.

Thought for the week...

Any discussion of how pain and suffering fit into God's scheme ultimately leads back to the cross. - Philip Yancey

When Things Look Hopeless, Look Back **By Carol DeWelt**

The year 2020 is behind us and we're now looking forward to 2021, hoping it will not be another upside-down year. This past year has been trying to say the least, and many of us wrestle with anxiety about what's to come next. Between COVID-19, the economy, racial tensions, and politics, it's overwhelming and discouraging to consider it all. However, we're in good company.

In Psalm 77, the psalmist wrestled with many worries too. In the first 9 verses, he cried out to God, grieved, and begged God for intervention and answers. In his discouraged state, he even wondered if God was still listening or if God would step in and help him. However, the psalmist did something that totally changed his outlook on life and on God, and the psalmist's example is one that we should all follow.

After pouring out his laments and worries, in verses 10 – 12, the psalmist resolves to change his focus:

Then I thought, ‘To this I will appeal:
the years when the Most High stretched out his right hand.
I will remember the deeds of the Lord;
yes, I will remember your miracles of long ago.
I will consider all your works
and meditate on all your mighty deeds.’ (NIV)

The psalmist then listed the ways God was faithful in the past, how God showed his power in the past, and how God showed His love to His people before. As the psalmist listed out these different things, the tone of his voice began to sound confident, the total opposite of the first 9 verses in this chapter. In fact, when he closed out the chapter, the tone of his voice was that of victory and not of defeat.

By shifting his focus off his circumstances and onto God, the psalmist shifted his focus to the only place where he could find hope. The psalmist looked back on the evidence to prove God’s goodness, God’s involvement in trials, and God’s deliverance through trials. Though the psalmist’s circumstances appeared hopeless, looking back on God’s faithfulness gave him the confidence that God indeed was at work, God indeed was mighty, and God indeed was faithful to lead him through his challenges.

None of us knows how the next few months will go, and none of us knows if things will actually get better or worse. But amidst this seamlessly hopeless situation, one thing we can do is focus on God’s faithfulness in the past. Whether we actually see God working now or not, looking back on God’s mighty deeds can boost our confidence that He’s got this situation under control and He will use this situation for His glory.

As you wrestle with what’s to come this year, take some time to do what the psalmist did in Psalm 77. Write down the ways God has been faithful in your life, how He has led you through challenges before, and how He has shown His power to you in the past. Keep your focus on God and His power during this next season. If you do, you’ll see your outlook on life shift from hopeless to victorious, just as it did for the psalmist.

Time For A Laugh

