

Revival & REFORMATION

The Official "United in Prayer" Weekly Blog and Prayer Requests
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God is Good, Even in the Middle of the Storm! September 8, 2019

By Melody Mason

Can we still trust God's goodness, even in the middle of life's storms, even when tragedy strikes? It's easy to say yes in theory, but what about practical life when the rubber really hits the road?

A few weeks ago, one of my dear friends, MaryAnn Knutson, along with her three daughters, was in a horrific car accident. In the crash, MaryAnn's oldest daughter Sierra was killed. Sierra was nine years old. The younger two girls escaped with minor injuries, but the accident left MaryAnn paralyzed from the chest down. Suddenly MaryAnn, a vibrant outdoorswoman, energetic gardener, hiker, pianist, and homeschooling mom, and her husband TJ, were thrust into the middle of a family's worst nightmare. And yet, from the very beginning as I've watched their tragic story unfold, it's been evident that God has been very near; their faith, even in the midst of tragedy, has been a shining witness to all those watching.

This past weekend I flew to California to spend three days at MaryAnn's bedside in the hospital. Her recovery has been slow and agonizing, but progress is happening. MaryAnn is starting to regain movement in her arms, and was able to reach out and awkwardly hug her children for the first time. She's also been slowly weaning off the ventilator, and she's starting to eat again. She still can't talk, due to the trach in her neck, but soon she will be transferring to rehab where she will be learning how to live as a quadriplegic. Each day we see fresh miracles and fresh answers to prayer. We are so grateful for the hundreds, maybe thousands that are praying.

One of my specific prayers for MaryAnn and TJ during this difficult time has been that God would strengthen their faith, and that they would still be able to see His goodness even in this tragedy. Let me share evidences that God has answered this prayer.

The final evening before I left, several of us were talking around MaryAnn's bedside about how many people have been touched by their story. With no prompting, MaryAnn earnestly mouthed the following words to us: "When you tell our story, be sure to tell people that God is good! And He's been so good to me! Tell them that He's been merciful and faithful to our family in so many ways, each step of our journey. Also, tell them to put away anything that comes between them and God because we don't have much time. He's coming soon to take us home and we need to be ready to meet Him."

This wasn't the only time MaryAnn expressed these strong sentiments. Even while lying on a hospital bed in a paralyzed body, with a daughter in the grave, and not able to care for herself or her remaining children, she witnessed to visitors, to hospital staff, to her family, and to me that

God is good! Each time, all I could do was look heavenward in awe. My life and faith will never be the same again.

You see, to be honest, when I made the decision to visit MaryAnn, it was my heart prayer that I could somehow strengthen MaryAnn's faith, but the reality of our three days together was that her faith strengthened mine. Yes, we cried together—buckets of tears—we prayed, we claimed the promises, we talked, and we cried some more. The pain is very deep and very real. Yet through it all, TJ and MaryAnn's hope and trust and faith in God is unwavering. Of course, we can't make sense or humanly explain away such life tragedies. Yet we know that no tragedy ever catches God by surprise. No death, no hurricane, tornado or fire, no pain or loss escapes God's notice. While *all things are not good*, God's Word tells us that all things *work together for good* to those who walk according to His purpose (see Rom. 8:28). So that means even in tragedy and suffering, God's faithfulness is unchanged.

Dear friends, whatever trial or crisis you are facing right now, remember this world is not our home! We have a better home coming and someday all our pain will make sense. I take comfort in this passage from *Desire of Ages*: "God never leads His children otherwise than they would choose to be led, if they could see the end from the beginning, and discern the glory of the purpose which they are fulfilling as co-workers with Him. Not Enoch, who was translated to heaven, not Elijah, who ascended in a chariot of fire, was greater or more honored than John the Baptist, who perished alone in the dungeon. 'Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake.' Philipians 1:29. And of all the gifts that Heaven can bestow upon men, fellowship with Christ in His sufferings is the most weighty trust and the highest honor" (p. 224).

Life isn't easy but I've seen with my very own eyes, God is good, even in the middle of the storm.

Melody Mason is coordinator for United in Prayer for the World Church, and author of the book Daring to Ask for More: Divine Keys to Answered Prayer.

World Church Prayer Requests

September 8-15, 2019

- **PRAYER REQUEST:** Please pray for those who are dealing with horrific loss in the wake of Hurricane Dorian that ripped through the Bahamas. Pray for food, water, and rescue support to reach those that are stranded.
- **PRAYER REQUEST:** Please pray for those you know who are going through significant loss, whether it be by death, divorce, loss of health, loss of faith, or some other significant painful trial. Pray that they can see God hasn't abandoned them, and He is still near even in the storms.
- **PRAYER REQUEST:** Pray for our Church, and especially your local church, that God will help us to be lights and witnesses in our communities for His soon coming! Pray for the Holy Spirit to be poured out.
- **PRAYER REQUEST:** Pray for your local pastor, that God will put a hedge of protection around his family, his marriage and his ministry. Pray that he will have wisdom and strength for the difficult work of shepherding the flock.
- **PRAYER REQUEST:** Please pray for our World Church, and especially for the upcoming Annual Council meetings that will take place in Silver Spring, MD in October. Pray that God will give wisdom and direction for the meetings and that the Holy Spirit will be present in a very profound way.