

## **“All Things Work Together for Good”**

I've been thinking a lot lately about why we end up in the place we are, experiencing the things we experience. Is it just chance? Is the reason things happen simply brought about by accident? Are we “fated” to be in the place we are?

A lot of times, we simply answer the question with a “it's God's will.” What we wanted isn't what God wanted for us. And as trite and cliché as it sounds, it's completely true. God is in control. We have free will, but God uses our free will to put us where He wants us to be at the time He wants us to be there.

We know **Romans 8:28** by heart: “...***we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.***” But seriously, have we put any thought into what that means? In order for God to bring about His purpose, we go through a lot of things, both good and bad. And the result will be good. No, REALLY!

Examples from God's word:

In **Genesis 28**, we read of Joseph being stripped of his “coat of many colors” that his father had given to him and sold into slavery by his brothers. Not really a good thing to have happen to someone. He eventually is sold to Potiphar, an Egyptian official and became the manager of Potiphar's household. That's a good thing, right? Not necessarily so. In **Genesis 39**, Potiphar's wife told lies about Joseph and he was placed in prison; a bad thing. But, he was given the opportunity to interpret dreams for Pharaoh and was released and, in **Genesis 41**, he is put in charge of all the land of Egypt. Joseph is now in a position to help get Egypt through a famine and save his own people. His brothers, looking for help, didn't recognize Joseph until he revealed himself to them. They feared revenge, but Joseph looked at what happened to him as one of those “***things God works for the good of those who love Him.***” This is what he says to his trembling brothers:

***“God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So then, it was not you who sent me here, but God.”***  
**(Genesis 45:7-8)**

Had Joseph stayed in the land of his fathers, he would never have come to power in Egypt. And because of the famine, they would have all starved. God put him in those places in order to carry out His purpose.

One more, and I'll save the last for next week. In **Esther 2**, Esther, a Jewess, is made queen to Xerxes, ruler of Persia. She is forbidden by her uncle Mordecai to reveal her family background and nationality. The highest of the royal officials, Haman, was to be bowed down to and paid homage, but Mordecai would not. This angered Haman so much that he desired that all of the Jews in Persia be killed. A decree was issued, and a date was set for the annihilation of all of the Jews, including Esther. Mordecai convinced

Esther to go and plead for the lives of her people. This is how Mordecai described the source and purpose of her “fate”:

***“Do not think that because you are in the king’s house you alone of all the Jews will escape. For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father’s family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?”***  
(Esther 4:12-14)

Had Esther not been chosen as queen to Xerxes, she would never have been given to opportunity to save her people, the Jews, from destruction. Mordecai reasoned that God had put her there, in just the right place, at just the right time, in order for all “things to work out for the good of those who love Him.”

More next week.

---Johnny Stephens