

Because Cindi is out of town, I've been pretty bored and looking for things to do. Yesterday I came by the church for a little while to clean and do a few odds and ends, and on my way home I drove past an accident over at the corner of Madison and Kiwanis. One car had been rear-ended and the back end was pretty well crunched. I don't know if there had been a third car involved or what, because the front end of that car was pretty well crunched too. As I was passing, I noticed that the car that was all crunched up had dealer plates on it and the temporary paper plates in the window... It was a brand new car and my first thought was, "I'm glad that wasn't my car... That guy is having one of those 'ain't my day' types of days. At the risk of trespassing on Terry's territory of "interesting" jokes, I came across a couple of stories that illustrate what I mean about that type of day... Did you hear about the train that was going through town but wasn't scheduled to stop? There was a very short passenger on the train who wanted to get off because if he didn't, he would have to pay \$100.00 for a taxi to bring him back to town... Well, the man sitting in the seat next to him had a

brilliant idea! He said, “Look, this train always slows down to pick up the mailbag. When it slows down, I’ll hold you out the window. When I drop you, you start running so you won’t fall, and simply run to a stop!”

Well, the train did slow down, and the man took his little friend, held him out the window and dropped him! The man was running along the platform, waving at him, thanking him for his help!... About that time, a man seated in the next car saw the little man running on the platform and waving his hands. The man reached out and grabbed him, pulled him in through the window, and said, “This is your lucky day, you almost missed the train.” ... That’s an “it ain’t my day” day! How about this one - There was this little guy sitting in a bar just looking at his drink! He didn’t move for half an hour. Then this big trouble-making truck driver stepped up next to him, took the drink from the guy and just drank it all down. The poor man started crying. The truck driver turned and said, “Come on man, I was just joking. Here, I’ll buy you another drink. I just can’t stand to see a grown man crying.”

“No, it’s not that ... Today is the worst day of my life! ... First, I overslept and was late for an important meeting and my boss got mad and fired me. When I left the building to go to my car, I found out that it was stolen. The police said they could do nothing, so then I got a cab to return home, and after I paid the cab driver and the cab had gone, I found that I left my wallet in the cab. I got home only to find my wife had left me for my best friend. I left home depressed and came to this bar. And now, when I was thinking about ending my life, you show up and drink the poison! ... That’s an “it ain’t my day” day!

Let’s face it: Life is filled with bad days! Even bad months, or even bad years!

But there is a promise recorded in the Bible that we can lean on when we’re going through those tough days. Please stand with me as we read the scripture for this morning, Rom.

8:28. (Read)

That’s a promise of God that we should never forget! There are several things in this one verse that can help us to not

only hang on through the tough times, but to grow and thrive through them and because of them.

Let's take the next little bit to think about what to remember about this little verse when you're having one of those "Ain't my day" days.

(1) REMEMBER THAT THIS IS GOD'S PROMISE TO YOU!

There are 3 words that are extremely important in really understanding this verse - "We" ... "Know" ... and "All" ... *

"And we know that all things"

A) "WE"

We refers to the ones that love God and are called. There are only two types of people in this world - Those who love God and those who don't! What I've heard some pastors in the past refer to as "the saints and the ain'ts". A lot of people say they love God, but Jesus says, "If you love Me, keep My commandments." Don't love just in words, but love in deeds and action. In other words, people who truly love God don't just say it, they show it!

Remember, God's promise is to those who love God and are called according to his purpose! You see, not everyone can

say, “Don’t worry, everything will work out”, because everything doesn’t work out for everybody! Everything works out for God’s children! People of the world may say, “Well, I’m not a Christian and everything is going fine for me.” But the truth is that if that person dies and goes into eternity without God, things really didn’t work out for them! All things work together for good to “them that love God.”

B) “KNOW”

There are a lot of things about God, the Bible, and life that we don’t know... One thing that I’ve always said is that the more I learn about God the more I realize how much I don’t know about God. He reveals Himself to us, but He is so far above and beyond us that it’s impossible for us to fully grasp and understand everything about Him. We’ll understand a lot more when we see Him face to face in heaven, but even then, I can’t imagine that we will much more than scratch the surface of who and what He really is. Here and now, we don’t always know how to pray... We don’t know what Jesus physically looks like... We don’t know exactly when Jesus is

coming again... As matter of fact, we don't even know what is going to happen in the next five minutes!

It's dishonest to claim that you don't know what you do know, and it's foolish to claim that you do know what you don't know! But no one should hesitate to claim to know what they do know!

“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God...”

Note: It did not say “and we see that all things” It says, “We know that all” Faith is knowing without first having to see.

C) “ALL”

Now think about this, what is all?

“Every one of,” ... All means all and that's all, all means!

“All things”... not a few things, not the good things, not the glorious things, but all things! The sunshine, the rain, the gladness, the sadness, the heartache, the heartbreak...

whatever, whenever, they all work together for our good and for God's glory!

(2) REMEMBER GOD'S PROVIDENCE OVER YOU!

There is a saying that behind every promise of God is the providence of God. What does providence mean? Providence means to see beforehand and to provide for what is seen! The providence of God simply means that God sees every event before it occurs, and provides for that event and makes sure that it fits into His plan for your life!... Did you know that there are no accidents in the life of a child of God ... Just appointments? So often, disappointments are really “His-appointments!” So many times, what we think is a pebble of disappointment turns out to be a boulder of blessing!

I like that phrase: “work together!” * It means to create and eliminate, place and replace, to connect and group, press and stretch, move and operate, control and guide. It means that all things are continually working together for our good! God is in control of the believer’s life! Daily... moment by moment... God is arranging and re-arranging all things for the believer’s good!

You’ve probably all heard the story of the man who had been shipwrecked on an island! He made the best of things! He

prayed every day to be delivered! One day, his hut caught on fire by lightning. He cried and complained to God ... “Why did you burn up my hut?” In less than an hour, a rescue boat came and rescued him! They had spotted his smoke, thought it was a signal, and came to save his life!

Now that doesn't mean that all things that happen to us are good or feel good. As you well know everything that happens to us isn't always good! But everything that happens to us will ultimately work together for our good. Like biscuits, surely no one would eat a bowl of flour, or a cup of lard, or a cup of baking powder, or raw eggs, but mix them together and put them in the oven, and ... “yum, yum!” You see, it's not what goes into the bowl that matters, it's what comes out of the oven that counts!

You may not always enjoy the ingredients that God puts into the recipe of your life, but when He is finished baking it, you will have a Rom. 8:28 biscuit and it will taste good!

Remember God's promise to you, remember God's providence over you, and...

(3) REMEMBER GOD'S PURPOSE FOR YOU!

What is God's purpose? According to this verse, God's purpose for you is: "For our good." This means for our ultimate good... That the end result of your entire life will be to the good!

A good example is the story of Domingo Pacheco - On May 11, 1996, on his way to catch flight 592 out of Miami, he had a flat tire. After a hot, sweating, miserable half hour of changing a flat tire and complaining, "Why, why, why," he missed his flight and was so mad! His cell phone rang, it was his mother. She said, "Where are you?" He explained what happened about the tire... She said, "Turn your radio on and thank God... The plane, flight 592 out of Miami, just crashed into the Everglades." Praise God for a flat tire! It was for his good!

In 1971, Hein Pham, who served as an interpreter for Ravi Zacharias who ministered to the men in Vietnam, was captured and imprisoned on an island. He was treated cruelly by the communists and severely disciplined for helping the Americans. He was placed in a dark dungeon, not allowed to read the Bible or any English literature. Every

day he was forced to read Marx or other communist literature... He became very bitter towards the Christian faith and God and began to buckle under the pressure. He began to question, “Is there a God? Is Christianity real?” And so, he determined in his mind to never pray and talk about Christianity again. The next day he was put on duty to clean the latrines. As he was cleaning, he noticed a piece of paper, all messed up and he cleaned it off and put it in his pocket! When he got back to his cell, he remembered the piece of paper. He pulled out the paper and it was a page of the Bible that someone used as toilet paper! He opened it up and it read, “And we know that all things work together for good”. After that, he asked to clean the latrines every day, a job no one wanted, so he could find more of the Word of God to encourage him in the faith. Later on in life, Hein was amazingly released, but couldn’t leave the island. After a period of time, he and 50 other people decided to escape from the island by boat. One night, 4 Viet Cong guards came to the house and asked if he was planning an escape. He said, “No,” but after wrestling with God, he decided to come

out with the truth. The guards came back and asked him again, and he said, “Yes, I can’t lie, I am planning an escape.”... To his amazement, they said they were excellent navigators and wanted to go with him! They set sail and hit a terrible storm, but because of the ability of the guards, they made it through the storm... And the boats giving chase perished in the storm! Even in the storms, God is in control! What am I saying? “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose!”

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Two traveling angels stopped to spend the night in the home of a wealthy family. The family was rude and refused to let the angels stay in the mansion’s guest room. Instead, the angels were given a space in the cold basement. As they made their bed on the hard floor, the older angel saw a hole in the wall and repaired it. When the younger angel asked why, the older angel replied, “Things aren’t always what they seem.”

The next night the pair came to rest at the house of a very poor, but very hospitable farmer and his wife! After sharing what little food they had, the couple let the angels sleep in their bed, where they could have a good night's rest. When the sun came up the next morning the angels found the farmer and his wife in tears. Their only cow, whose milk had been their sole income, laid dead in the field. The younger angel was infuriated and asked the older angel, "How could you have let this happen? The first man had everything, yet you helped him," he accused. "The second family had little but was willing to share everything and you let their cow die." "Things aren't always what they seem," the older angel replied... "When we stayed in the basement of the mansion, I noticed there was gold hidden in that hole in the wall!" "Since the owner was so obsessed with greed and unwilling to share his good fortune, I sealed the wall so he wouldn't be able to find it." "Then last night as we slept in the farmer's bed, the angel of death came for his wife ... I told him to take the cow instead ... Things aren't always what they seem."

Sometimes this is exactly what happens when things don't turn out the way we think they should. If you have faith in God, just trust that every outcome is always to your advantage... What assurance we have here in this text! *

What a promise from God! "All things," whether we understand or not, shall work together for good to them that love God!

I remember when Covid first hit. Someone asked me why I was so calm while people were freaking out all around me. I said, "Well, I figure that one of three things is going to happen – I won't catch it, and I had nothing to worry about. I'll catch it, and then get better, so I had nothing to worry about. Or I'll catch it and die, but I know where I'm going when I die, so I have nothing to worry about."

So, when you're having a bad day, when you're going through these "all things," remember God's promise to you, remember God's provisions over you, and remember God's purpose for you! And above all, remember that God has promised eternal life in heaven with Him to those who have

trusted in Jesus as their savior. That's what I call a really good outcome to whatever this life can throw at you!

Maybe you haven't accepted that gift of eternal life... Maybe you've been struggling to trust that God is really there or that he really cares... Maybe there's some other business you need to take care of with God. The altar is open, come during the closing songs and take care of it today.

(Closing prayer)