

## OUR GOD IN TIMES OF TROUBLE

by Ron Harvey

### INTRODUCTION

God has sent many, many, many wonderful and blessed days. He has blessed us with plenty. He has given us every conceivable pleasure. He has brought joy in our hearts when we didn't deserve to have joy. He has been merciful to us. He has been gracious to us. He has been longsuffering toward us. He has forgiven us our sins. Because we are in Jesus, he blesses us every day.

He has given us a church full of friends. He has given us sweet fellowship. He has given us songs in our hearts to sing unto him. He has given us song leaders to lead us. He has given us musicians to play for us.

He has given us a beautiful building which we could not afford had it not been virtually gifted to us. He has given us money to pay our bills.

He has given us wise elders to conduct our business and to keep our church business in order.

He has given us Bible teachers.

God has given us workers who take care of our grounds and any other physical issues that arise.

He has given us godly women who work behind the scenes doing God's business.

Can anyone here deny that God is good? Can anyone here deny that God has been good to our church?

Let us declare, "He has been good. He's been abundantly good."

But a question has always troubled us. Why do bad things happen to good people? Now I would like to change that question just a little bit since we know that there is none good, no not one. So, I would change to question to ask, "Why do bad things happen to God's people?"

Now I want to suggest to you that if you are a human being and you live in this world, then pain and sorrow and hurt feelings and even tragedy will eventually come your way.

**Example: I remember one night, in the middle of the night, I got a telephone call from my daughter, and crying and in panic, she told me my son-in-law had shot himself and he was dead. And my two granddaughters suddenly had no daddy.**

Those kinds of things make your knees buckle in grief and they are not explainable. And they make you sick at your stomach and make you ask, "Why do these things happen to God's people?"

But, one thing we all know by experience, is that sometimes, in the course of God being good to us, things happen to us that aren't pleasant for the moment. Hasn't that been your experience in life too? God sends things upon us -- things that hurt. These things aren't good things for the moment. Sometimes these things make us sad. And sometimes they make us cry. And always, they challenge our faith in God.

In order to answer that question, why do bad things happen to God's people, we must begin this message by pointing out what we all know so well here at our church, and that is,

I. God is in control of all things.

This church has always stood on the proposition that God is in control of all things. This is a fundamental bible truth. Now many reject that truth in our day. You can go from church to church in our city and in every other city and many of those churches reject that truth. But we haven't rejected that truth here. And we believe it when the Bible says,

*Our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he pleased.*  
Psalm 115:3

*Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places.*

Psalm 135:6

But now, one of those hurtful moments has come upon us as a church. And it doesn't seem pleasant at all. In fact, it downright hurts.

And now it is time to ask ourselves, "Do we believe God works all things after the counsel of his own will," or not. Is God in control, or are we just subject to the winds of fate as they blow our way?

And the Scriptures are very clear on the matter.

*And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?*

Daniel 4:35

Now, this passage implies that at times God sends difficulties and hurts our way. And we might like to veto his will at times. But it says that we can't stop him. It says, *none can stay his hand*. When God moves, the forces of heaven and earth cannot stop him.

We can pray to Him and we can ask him to keep the evil from us. But if God sends difficulties our way, we cannot stay his hand.

Now this shows our absolute inability to prevent the will of God upon our lives. If he chooses to send trouble, then trouble will come marching in.

That's why it says, *all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing*. We can no more stop the sovereign will of God, than we could stop a giant tsunami from washing over us. And I tell you, God does according to his will with every human being that has ever lived.

Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls, according to this passage, we are nothing, and he is everything. And, *he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth*.

You may think that you have control of your life. But there is one that has control and that is God. And he brings good and he brings evil. (evil meaning disasters and trouble) And none can stay his hand.

*I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these things.*

Isaiah 45:7

And what is true for individuals, is also true of churches.

Here at Grace Baptist Church, we are a body of people who believe that Jesus died for us. We are a body of believers who love Him. We are a body of believers who gather together to worship him and carry out his ordinances. And we are a body of believers who cannot stay his hand. We are a body of believers who must acknowledge that in all things he does according to his will. We have our plans and God has his plans. And when the two diverge, then God's plans shall prevail, because we cannot stay his hand.

You see, ours are weak hands. But, His are mighty hands. His hands created the universe. His hands keep the planets in their orbits. His hands do whatsoever they want to do. And no one can stay his hand.

I want to tell you that this applies whether you are an individual human being or a collective body of believers. The winds of God's will shall always blow across our lives and his will shall be done and none can stay his hand.

Ladies and gentlemen, Jesus taught us to pray, "*Lord, not my will, but thine be done,*" because God's will shall prevail and our will cannot stay his hand.

Sometimes God's will is not comfortable for the moment. But it is our duty to say, *not my will, but thine be done.*

Job said,

*Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.*

Job 13:15

But, when the winds of God blow, sometimes they blow in good things, healthy things, pleasant things, sweet things and things that bring us joy and comfort. And at other times, they blow in unpleasant things and bitter things that bring us sorrow and discomfort. But, whatever God brings our way, whether it be great blessings or trouble or hardship or sorrow for a season, we can always trust in the great and wonderful truth that,

II. God will always do us good in the end.

We not only believe that God is sovereign, but also we believe that God loves us. We believe that God chose to love us from the beginning and that he does love us and that if he loved

us from the beginning, he will continue to love us to the end.

We believe that Jesus cares for us like a mother loves her children. And we believe that he will always, always do us good. We believe that he is our shepherd and we are his sheep.

And we have learned that sometimes, even for churches, in the course of God doing us good, there must be a little pain along the way, a little sorrow mixed in. Sometimes there is much pain and much sorrow. And we simply have to believe in the One who is in control of all things and believe that he is doing us good.

Paul said,

*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.*

Romans 8:28

And now, when there is pain, do we believe that God is actually doing us good? Now is the time for faith. Now is the time to put our knowledge of God's Word to the test. We have studied His Word and we know what it says with our heads. Now, are we willing to believe it in our hearts?

Does God work all things for good to them that love him, or was Paul a liar?

You see, now that trouble has beset us, it is time to trust God and his Word. There are those who will stop believing in times of trouble. But, the thing to do is to keep believing and watch God deliver us in the end.

**Example: I want to tell you that I have travelled down the wrong road on several occasions in my life. And I have sinned against God and I have forsaken him at times. And I have committed sins that I'm now ashamed of. And I could have brought ruin on my life. But, here's what I found. Because I belong to Jesus, no matter how hard I tried to ruin my own life, God brought good out of it every time. I don't know how he does it, but He is able to take evil circumstances and turn them into good. You know, when he wants to bring evil upon us, we can't stay his hand. And likewise, when he is determined to bring good upon us, we can't stay his hand!**

And he is determined to do good unto his people. And he is determined to do good unto his church. And he will bring good out of bad. He will bring life out of death. He will bring joy out of distress. And though his northerly wind shall blow in cold sorrow for a season, the south wind shall finally blow in the warmth of God's goodness and the sorrow and the trouble will vanish away into everlasting forgetfulness.

This is what he will do for his church. And this is what he will do for us. And I tell you, he can do it in an instant. He can bring down in an instant and he can raise up in an instant. Jesus cursed the fig tree and it immediately withered. But, he said, Lazarus come forth, and Lazarus immediately came alive. Jesus gave the blind man his sight in one moment. Jesus spoke a word and the storm calmed. And it didn't take a month or a year. It took one moment and one word

from the Savior.

And that's how quickly the Lord can put an end to distress and bring his church to life. And I don't want to be presumptuous as to what he might do with our church, but I trust that he will be very gracious to Grace Baptist Church and bring us much good in the end.

III. God's plans, though they be sovereign and though they be irrefutable and though they are ultimately for our own good, when his plans involve trouble and distress, he graciously allows us a time of mourning.

He doesn't expect us to gleefully endure sorrow and hardship, but to patiently do so. And the bible says,

*To every thing there is a season and a time to every purpose under the heaven.*

*A time to weep and a time to mourn.*

Eccl. 3:1, 4

It seems that in the sovereign will of God, we have lost a pastor. And it is discomfoting. It's not pleasant. It is an ill wind that has blown over for a time. And it tests our faith. And there is not one person here who has any explanations or any answers that would satisfy our minds as to why these things happen.

And yet, there is One here who knows. For Jesus said,

*Where two or three or gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them.*

Wherever Jesus is seated here this morning, he knows. He sees the big picture. He sees the end from the beginning. He knows the good that He intends for us. Though **we** are afraid, **he's** not shaken. Though we suffer and mourn under a present loss, he has much in store to make us whole again.

Though he dispenses daily from his bag of mercies, the bag is ever full! And in his bag are gifts for me and for you and gifts for us as a church. He has very good gifts for us and he intends for us to have them and none can stay his hand.

*Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.*

I Cor. 2:9

## CONCLUSION

My message this morning is simple:

- I. God is in control.
- II. God intends us good.
- III. None can stay his hand.

Here is what I'm going to do. I'm going to leave here today and I'm going to confess my sins and shortcomings to God. And I am going to ask Him to be merciful to me.

And, then, I'm going to tell him that I trust him, though I don't understand him. And I'm going to ask him to use this difficult time to work in me a greater faith. You see, times like these give us a chance to stretch our faith and to test it and to strengthen it.

And then I am going to pray for each of you that God would see your hurts and your tears and have compassion on you and when the time for mourning is over, that he would turn your tears into gladness.

And I'm going to pray for my friend, Jack Duplechain and his wife, Virginia. And I know that God works all things for good to those that love him. And God will work good for Brother Jack and Virginia as well.