

The Plans of God May Not Include Fireworks for You!

I am preparing for a long day here in the Orlando area at a Youth Conference sponsored by Starlight Baptist Church. I almost always take a morning or afternoon flight to go to my meetings. But since I am needed to be here early this morning, I had to fly in last night. As we entered the air space of Orlando, the pilot came over the intercom and announced, "For those of you sitting on the left side of the airplane, if you will look out your windows you will see the fireworks of Disney World!" I was sitting on the right side of the airplane. No matter how I strained my neck, I was not able to even see a sparkler. I would have enjoyed watching fireworks from the topside looking down, instead of the usual way of bottom-side, looking up. I felt a little deprived.

Now I move into a more serious mode of thinking about what happens in real life situations when we are deprived a certain joy, encounter or opportunity. So with this trivial episode, I want to address what do you do when you believe you are sitting in the wrong seat of life.

1. Rejoice in the good seat of others.

"Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep" (Romans 12:15). This is a verse that I don't hear too many Christians claiming. Why? Basically, we want to rejoice too! It's not that we are against others being happy, but please, don't leave me out.

It sometimes is more severe than I just mentioned. I humorously have quoted a joke that perhaps you have heard before. Plaques are made that read: "If Papa ain't happy, nobody cares; if Mama ain't happy, ain't nobody happy." In truth, most every mother I know cares more than anybody in the family that her spouse and children are happy. The more appropriate application of motherhood is seen in the answer a child gave when the teacher asks, "If there are seven members of the family and Mom is dividing the pie, how many pieces will she cut?" the answer from the little boy was, "She would divide it into six pieces." The teacher said, "No," and posed the question again. Then the little boy quickly spoke up, "Ma'am, my mother would divide the pie into six pieces because she wouldn't take one for herself." This more appropriately addresses the unselfishness of most mothers.

In the event that you are feeling left out, did not get what you wanted in life, then give thanks for what you do have and rejoice for those you perceive "see the fireworks" out their window. I often think of the unselfishness of Prince Jonathan when he discovered that he, in God's plan, was not to be king. He did something very valiant. He recognized who was going to be the king (David), and not only promoted him, but became best friends with him. Jonathan actually lives and dies protecting David's right to the throne that many would have insisted was to be his instead. Listen to the words of a contented man: *"And Jonathan Saul's son arose, and went to David into the wood, and strengthened his hand in God. And he said unto him, Fear not: for the hand of Saul my father shall not find thee; and thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee..."* (II Samuel 23:16,17a). Even the world admires the unselfish person who puts the needs of the community above his or her own preferences.

2. Consider the peace of your seat.

As I was temporarily coveting the seats privy to fireworks, I considered the annoying racket from that side of the plane. It was louder, much louder than our side. There was a man on the other side of the plane who talked incessantly through the whole trip. He was one of those guys who knew a little bit about everything and was more than happy to exhaust his knowledge on your willing or unwilling ears. I considered my seat. It was quiet and conducive to meditation, reading and polite conversation with those nearby. Bible says, *"Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be*

content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Hebrews 13:5). It is no mere salve for a wounded spirit, it is a promise we all should personally claim: if we have Jesus, we have everything, therefore let us be content. Let me give you an antidote to "the grass is greener on the other side of the fence" syndrome. Would you like to know why the grass is greener? It is because that is where the septic tank is! The constant longing for greener grass is a misnomer. Let us consider Russell Conwell's story of over a century ago. The man who went looking for diamonds abroad, did not realize it, but he had acres of diamonds already in his own backyard. Before you give up your seat and fight for the fireworks side, you best ask yourself, what am I giving up and what am I really gaining?

3. Reckon yourself in the right seat.

If you have obeyed the admonition of not seeking your own way but Christ's righteousness and God's way, then accept your seat in life as the right seat (Matthew 6:33). I want to quote two famous verses coupled together that we often give to someone seeking the will of God. However, I want to add the first part of the next verse and show you some illumination that I believe will be helpful: "*Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. Be not wise in thine own eyes...*" (Proverbs 3: 5, 6 and 7a). Therefore, we are to trust in the Lord completely, pray for His will exclusively and do exactly what verse 7 commands, "*Be not wise in thine own eyes....*" Our man-centered logic is trumped every time by the wisdom of God!

Sitting next to me on the right side of the plane was a quiet young man. He was so quiet that I thought he might appreciate not being disturbed. At the appropriate time, I introduced myself and he was very polite. He spoke with social acumen that very much depicted a bygone era of manners. His name was Sam Calhoun. I asked him if he was kin to John C. Calhoun. And he was! I had just been reading the latest biography of President Andrew Jackson and I began to talk about the Jackson/Calhoun rivalry that was part and parcel of the debate that led up to the Civil War. The young man took interest in the history of his ancestor and seemed a little amazed to be sitting next to someone who cared. Before we left our seats, he was more than willing to let me say a good word for our Lord and he gladly accepted the gospel tract that I left with him. As Sam left the plane and I was gathering up my luggage, I was consumed with this thought: my interests in American history and while reading just hours before of John C. Calhoun served me well today. That was no accident. The young man's soul was so much more important than the fireworks outside any window. I was sitting in the right seat.

- Pastor Pope -

[Back to Pastor's Word](#)