
Heart and Soul ... A Weekly Meditation

January 26, 2014

Confidence in God

“I’m sure about this: the one who started a good work in you will stay with you to complete the job by the day of Christ Jesus.”
Philippians 1:6 (Common English Bible)

It is quite remarkable that someone sitting in a prison cell writes these words. Occasionally I meet someone who is experiencing difficulty – even anguish – who comments that Christianity works when all is well but the moment life turns an unpleasant corner the Christian faith is difficult to hold onto. I am always surprised by comments such as this one. It is my experience that times of difficulty present the ultimate opportunity to discover strength from the promises of the Bible. This sentence of scripture is an example; it astonishes me that regardless of our present circumstances God intends to complete a good work in us.

What this promise says to me is that there is more to come. Regardless of the struggle that engages us, God intends there to be another chapter in our lives. The present moment does not have the final word. My personal heartaches have included the miscarriage of our first child, betrayal by a friend and a devastating auto accident that took the life of my father-in-law and left me with a life-long back injury. I’ve also experienced professional heartaches; church members who have sought to diminish my ministry because I wasn’t exactly like a former pastor they deeply loved and a colleague who undermined my ministry at every opportunity. Not any of this belonged to God’s purposes for my life. I know because the cross demonstrates that there is brokenness in the world that is outside of God’s will. Naturally, each of our lives will receive some distribution of that brokenness.

Yet, this sentence from the Bible reminds me that God remains with me in the midst of these difficulties working to complete what God has purposed for me. Difficulties are momentary blockages in life. But God’s purposes will not be frustrated. I need only to trust and wait for God.

Additionally, as I ponder these words from the Apostle Paul it also becomes clear that it is not my grip on God that matters. What Paul is saying here is that it is God who has a solid grip on me. I am not confident in my goodness, my character or my strength to persevere through struggle. My confidence is in God. It is the same confidence Paul writes about here. And because of that confidence, joy pealed from his prison cell in Rome.

Thank You, Lord, for the confidence that in all of life, sorrow as well as joy, You are present. It is this promise that sustains me. Amen.

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