

It is a saying that began years ago and spread through the church. It is a call and response phrase, and requires at least two people to attain the full effect of its meaning. Person one says, “God is Good” and person two responds, “all the time”. Then person one says, “all the time” and person two says “God is Good”. By the time the exchange is completed both persons have agreed that God is Good all the time. It seems to me a simple and clear affirmation that rolls off the tongue quite easily when life is going according to plan, when life’s trials, struggles, and sorrows are at bay.

In the midst of the usual joys and challenges of ministry this week I found myself having to pause and reconsider that phrase carefully. Until this past week I had only heard it when life was carefree and going according to plan. However, this week a very wise person I know used the phrase from a very different context, one of great difficulty and sorrow. Think on that for a moment. It is so easy to believe in the goodness of God when life fits within our definition of what is good. When we have health and wealth confessing the goodness of God comes so easily. However, what if we lose something precious to us? What if our health declines or our wealth disappears? Is God still good? Do we really believe God is good all the time?

If we believe that God is good all the time then we must accept that God’s goodness is in *all of* our days not just the good days. If we believe this we confess our own human limits with humility and our need for God who is omniscient (unlimited knowledge) and omnipotent (unlimited power). We confess absolute dependence on a God who is also omnipresent, that is everywhere, acknowledging that there is no place absent of God’s presence, not even one. God is in all. The Psalmist in Psalm 139 knew something about God’s great love and presence in all circumstances.

“O Lord, you have searched me and known me. You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from far away. You search out my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways....You hem me in, behind and before,.....Where can I go from your spirit? Or where can I flee from your presence? If I ascend to heaven, you are there; if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there. If I take the wings of the morning and settle at the farthest limits of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me fast. If I say, “Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light around me become night,” even the darkness is not dark to you....Your eyes beheld my unformed substance. In your book were written all the days that were formed for me, when none of them as yet existed....I try to count them—they are more than the sand; I come to the end—I am still with you (selected verses).”

The God who knows all and has power over all walks with us everyday of our lives and then, when we think it is the end, it isn’t. Our loving God goes further by giving us more life and we continue on, in another place where God is present with us, life without end. Indeed, God is Good...*all* the time....*all* the time...God is good.

Grace and Peace, Natasha