

God's Mercy and Grace

It's been eight years, now, since the flood of 2008. As I sit here at my kitchen table enjoying a cup of coffee, my mind goes back to the memories stamped in it's crevices concerning this life changing event. Seems in many ways it was only last week that it happened. In others ways, seems like many years.

The City of Columbus knows very well the level of difficulty it was for it's citizens to deal with the aftermath of the flood. Of course, it was more difficult for some than for others but we were all touched by it in some way. Some, like Dave and myself, had to completely rebuild their homes while others helped kinfolk or friends or even people they didn't even know to cleanup and rebuild.

We, also, each had to make the decision as to whether to allow the flood to make us bitter or better. Would we let it defeat us or would we be over comers and learn from it? Dave and I chose to allow it to make us better, more compassionate and caring for those of us who have been knocked flat by life's circumstances.

As I recall, there have been two times in my life when tragedy personally struck me that the Holy Spirit brought to my mind Matthew 5:45 which says, "it rains on the just and the unjust." Yes, tragedy has struck me more than twice, but, there are only two times this verse has come to mind during it.

The first time was on April 28, 1980 when our first child was born stillborn and the second time was on June 7, 2008. The first, we lost our first born child. The second, we lost the total inside of the home we had purchased 22 years earlier along with all of it's contents.

Sometimes, those of us who are Christ followers think because we are this insulates us from all bad things that can happen to us in life, but, this is not so. God promises that he will be with us in times of tragedy to comfort and lean on and strengthen us but he doesn't say we won't have to go through these times.

Now, eight years after the flood, I think about God's faithfulness to me. Though I've had to endure the hardship of Dave's passing since then, today, I am overwhelmed as I think about God's mercy and grace.

By the time the flood hit, Dave's Alzheimer's disease had already digressed to the point that he was unable to make decisions. The most he could do was to take a push room and sweep the floor. A floor that wasn't really a floor but a bunch of planks. This meant I had to make all rebuilding decisions without him.

God, in his mercy and grace, provided us with a daughter who is an electrician by trade and a son-in-law who is a carpenter. He, also, provided us with people, mostly men, who knew how to build a house. These men were so kind and generous with their time and knowledge. We experienced an abundance of God's grace and mercy day after day during the entire rebuilding.

God, in his mercy and grace, allowed us to have enough money saved and in the bank to be able to pay for the materials and workers it took for the rebuilding. This took everything we'd

saved but at no time did we ever run in the red because we didn't have the money to cover an expense and we were still able to pay our tithe the whole time.

In the years since the flood, God, in his mercy and grace, has allowed my counseling practice to reopen. Along with this work, God continues to provide me with many opportunities to speak for him and influence people for the cause of Christ. Acts 20:24

Friend, I close my column today with a simple but heavy question. Since the flood of 2008, have you become bitter or better? Whichever, it has been your choice.

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