

A Stop by Quiet Waters

By
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Inexhaustible Resources

I awoke before dawn this morning struggling with a situation for which I had no answers. I had worked long and hard in an attempt to bring help, and hope to a group of leaders who were discouraged, confused, and somewhat divided. My expectations had been far greater than my accomplishments, and I felt defeated and a failure. You understand what I'm talking about because you have been there, or may even be there now. We encounter such situations in ministry over and over. As I lay there praying Romans 8 came to my mind.

I went to my study to look at it more carefully and here's what I found. *"In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we are to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express."* We are not in ministry alone. When we face situations for which we have no answers, we're not as stymied as we feel we are, for the Holy Spirit knows what we need and presents our situations to God with a clarity and earnestness which is beyond us. Paul goes on to say, *"And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will."*

Though circumstances may confound you to the point where you don't even know what to pray for, or how to pray, your situation is not as hopeless as it appears to be, for the Holy Spirit is communicating your situation to your heavenly Father. And he fully understands what the Spirit is expressing because the Spirit is praying on your behalf in accordance with God's will for you. This is why you have never been utterly defeated or destroyed. This is why we never stay stuck in the same situation forever, and this is why we can look back on past struggles and see them as just that, a past struggle from which we have been delivered.

The next thing that caught my attention was this statement, *"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."* Decades ago my pastoral mentor taught me to view Romans 8:28 this way: **"If bad, then good!"** Even if we're unable to bring the help needed to a situation, even if we're unable to solve the problem, even if all we can do is stand by helplessly while the pain deepens and the mess gets messier, we can still hold tightly to the truth that God is at work in this situation for those involved in it who truly love him. God will do with it what we never can. Be encouraged to know that though the work before you is beyond you, it's not beyond God who has called you to it and is with you in it.

Dear friend, we don't have control over other people, nor should we try to control them. We've been called to proclaim the truth, first by modeling it in our own lives, and then declaring it with our words. Let's do our best to influence others in ways that are good and right, but leave the results in the hands of God. The Lord Jesus himself stood with love and sorrow mixed in his heart as he watched the rich young man sorrowfully turn away from him rather than receive the words of life he had offered him.

My spirits were lifted even higher when I came to these words, "*Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: 'For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.'* No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us." I felt the strength of the living word of God flowing into me, lifting my spirit and exciting my heart. The situation which was so troubling to me had no power or ability in any way to come between me and the love of Christ for me. I might be unable to solve that problem, but the foundation of my life was still intact and my relationship with the Lord remained as joy-filled and intimate as ever.

Be encouraged, pastor, with the knowledge that though you may fail again and again as you seek to accomplish the good things you set out to do in the kingdom of God, none of the failures, none of the struggles, none of the confusion, none of the uncertainty, or anything else can separate you from the intimate, heart-filling, peace-producing love of Jesus Christ for you. You are truly more than a conqueror through Him who has loved and continues to love you! Herein is our victory and success in ministry!

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