

This is the Day...Tuesday

January 25, 2022

There is Always Another Hill

“Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love Him.” (James 1:12)

As young children, my friends and I road our bikes all over Gaston County. It was not unusual for us to set out in the morning and ride all day, exploring places we have never seen before. As a young boy, it was always exciting to find new places and see new things. We would find old, abandoned houses on an unknown street, and pretend that they were haunted. We would make friends with dogs in a neighborhood far from our own. We would explore creeks and ponds along the road that we never knew existed.

Whenever we were on these adventures, we knew that when late afternoon approached, it was time to begin making our way back home. By the afternoon, we were all getting tired and always tried to find the most direct route back to our neighborhood. Unfortunately, we all knew that the most direct route back to Dogwood Drive meant going over the “Death Valley Hill.” The most direct way into our neighborhood was a road that was a short downhill slope into a valley, followed by a long, steep, uphill slope to the road I lived on. It was the shortest way home, but also the most difficult. No matter how much speed we gained going down the short hill, it was never enough to help us up the next hill. We tried on many occasions and usually gave up before making it to the top. It was just too hard. Inevitably, we would turn around and go nearly a mile around the neighborhood to a flatter road.

One afternoon, as we were heading home, a nice thunderstorm popped up. It began with wind and rain and then some very sharp lightning. We were peddling as fast as possible to get home. Some of my friends avoided the death valley hill, and went around the neighborhood to the easier road. But I wanted to get home quickly. I was determined to conquer the death valley hill that day. In the wind and rain, I gained as much speed as possible going into the valley. Halfway up the steep hill, my legs began to ache as I tried to keep moving. Through my perseverance, I was able to crest the hill and get home much faster than my friends.

It seems like life can be like the death valley hill. Doesn't it seem like everyday of life brings a new hill? This has been especially true during the Covid era. Dealing with the isolation, fearful of becoming sick, trying to carry on with our daily life. It's just one hill after another. But God reminds us that, through our perseverance, we will receive all that God has promised us. Straining to get up the hill every day is not easy, but the hills are a part of life. They are the part of reveals God's presence and grace to us. They are the part that strengthen us for the next hill. And that is important because there is always another hill.