

This is the Day...Friday

May 6, 2022

Even the Thorns have a Purpose

“Therefore, in order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But He said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me.” (2 Corinthians 12:7b-9)

Jenny Burleson lived at the end of our street where Dogwood Drive intersected with Eighth Avenue. Jenny was a very sweet, older lady who had moved into the neighborhood not long after Mom and Dad. She had two sons who were always involved in all the neighborhood activities. Her oldest son, David, went on to become a Gastonia city policeman and the younger son, Mark, became a schoolteacher. She had lost her husband to cancer when he was relatively young so, Jenny was left to raise her boys on her own. My mom always spoke very highly of Ms. Burleson and how well she was raising her children. Dad always mentioned Jenny’s yard and landscaping. She kept her yard pristine, with a beautiful rose garden along the fence of her backyard.

No one was happy on the day that I was riding my bike down our street, going well above the posted speed limit. Everything would have been fine as I attempted to turn on to Eighth Avenue if it had not been for that loose gravel in the road. As I was turning, I hit the loose gravel, lost control of my bicycle and careened directly into Jenny’s yard and through her rose bushes. When it was over, two rose bushes were destroyed, and I looked like I had been in a fight with a Bobcat. I don’t know if that rose bush had thorns or that thorn bush had roses! Jenny was very gracious when she saw the damage and appeared to be much more concerned about my wellbeing than the roses. She sat me down on her front porch and began pulling thorns out of my arms, back and legs with tweezers. As she dug the thorns out of my flesh, I asked her why something so beautiful had so many thorns. That is when Jenny explained, “Without the thorns we can’t see the beauty. Those thorns protect the rose. The thorns make the beauty possible.”

Sometimes we view the pains and hurts and struggles of life as thorns in our flesh. But, in fact, without those pains and trials we would not see the beauty they reveal in us and in the world around us. Our times of dealing with the thorns help us realize our true dependence on God. In our weakness and pain, God reveals his power and presence.

On this day which God has given you, if you have just run through some thorns, there is one who will reveal His grace and patiently work to help you to get past the thorns and see the beauty in your life.