

Sabbath Moments
A Service of Healing and Wholeness

Sunday, May 25, 2008, 6pm
Southport Presbyterian Church
The Toney Chapel

God Provides ...

**I wait quietly before God,
For my hope is in him.
He alone is my rock and my salvation,
My fortress where I will not be shaken.
My salvation and my honor come from God alone.
He is my refuge, a rock where no enemy can reach me.
O _____, trust in him at all times.
Pour out your heart to him, for God is our refuge.**
(Psalm 62:5-8, insert your own name in the blank ...)

Now here I am in front of you, and you have your dreams too, or have had them. And I can tell you something. That mistaken injection that paralyzed my leg was not a stroke of bad luck. It was a grace.

Let's be precise. There's no point in pious platitudes. It was bad luck, yes. It was a misfortune. But God turned it into a grace. I had a useless leg. I could not climb. So I got a jeep and became a meteorologist. Through no wish of my own, there I was where I belonged: in the desert. Instead of trudging through the snow I trudged through the sand. Instead of mountain passes I came to know caravan routes. Instead of chamois I saw gazelles. Life suddenly appeared to me as it was, an immense personal exodus. Now I saw the desert as an extraordinary environment of silence and prayer.

My crippled leg helped me to "stand firm" (James 1:12).

I the runner – now stood firm.

I who'd always tried to do two things at once – now I stood firm.

No doubt about it, it was a plus. Deep down inside I began to understand that I hadn't been cheated. Misfortune had thrust me upon new paths. Brothers and sisters before me with your misfortunes, I testify to you of one thing only. Today, thirty years after the incident that paralyzed my leg, I don't say it wasn't a misfortune. I only say that God was able to transform it into grace.

(Carlo Carretto, talking to a group of handicapped people, recorded in *Why, O Lord?*)

But you, Timothy, belong to God; so run from all these evil things, and follow what is right and good. Pursue a godly life, along with faith, love, perseverance, and gentleness. Fight the good fight for what you believe. Hold tightly to the eternal life that God has given you, which you have confessed so well before many witnesses.

(1st Timothy 6:11-12)

Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him! So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.
(Matthew 7:9-12)

O eternal God, though thou art not such as I can see with my eyes or touch with my hands, yet grant me this day a clear conviction of Thy reality and power. Let me not go forth to my work believing only in the world of sense and time, but give me grace to understand that the world I cannot see or touch is the most real world of all. My life today will be lived in time, but eternal issues will be concerned in it. The needs of my body will be clamant, but it is for the needs of my soul that I must care most. My business will be with things material, but behind them let me be aware of things spiritual. Let me keep steadily in mind that the things that matter are not money or possessions, not houses or lands, not bodily comfort or bodily pleasure; but truth and honor and meekness and helpfulness and a pure love of Thyself ...

I, a pilgrim of eternity, stand before Thee, O eternal One. Let me not seek to deaden or destroy the desire for Thee that disturbs my heart. Let me rather yield myself to its constraint and go where it leads me. Make me wise to see all things today under the form of eternity, and make me brave to face all the changes in my life which such a vision may entail: through the grace of Christ my Savior. Amen.
(From *A Diary of Private Prayer*, by John Baillie)

We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently. In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. 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. 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.
(Romans 8:22-28)

God be with you until we meet again.