



August, 2020



For I know
the plans I have
for you,
declares the LORD,
plans for welfare
and not for evil,
to give you a future
and a hope.

Jeremiah 29:11

Gleanings How many times have you walked through your house/apartment and looked at some electrical device that uses a battery only to find that it has stopped working? Is there no way to stay ahead of this problem? The short answer is, of course, "Yes." One response would be to create a list of all battery driven devices organized by the type of battery required, create a schedule based upon how long the particular type of battery lasts, and preemptively change them all before the batteries quit delivering power. Is this type of action really necessary? The answer depends on how critical the battery-operated device is for meeting your requirements/expectations. If it is important enough, you will do what you must do.

This is true not just for battery-operated devices, but for other things that you depend upon. Internal combustion engines require regular, periodic service and maintenance. If you grow and/or raise your own food, you must provide nurturing care to gardens and livestock. Children require a loving, nurturing environment in which to grow and flourish. Attention to health needs, social and emotional needs, regular hugs and kisses, and educational challenges enable young people to develop the skills necessary to adapt to changes in their worlds. An alliteration from my Lay Speaker training illustrates the core concept of my ramblings: **Prior preparation prevents poor performance.**

No one can say that they were adequately prepared for the current pandemic and the changes that it has forced upon how we live. We are all scrambling to find ways to live according to our normal patterns while seeking to avoid becoming infected with a virus we do not understand and cannot control. Some days are better than others. Some days take us down and leave us crying for help and comfort. We never know ahead of time what will be the outcome of any particular day. Now, having made such an absolute statement let me say that it is only partially true.

Remember the earlier alliteration? If one's preparation has
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included prayer (another “P” word), usually at the beginning of the day, one can know that God will be with them no matter what the events of the day may throw at them. The Bible affirms what we know in our hearts to be true: God will never leave us or forsake us, neither forget us nor cast us aside; God will be with us through it all. That truth gives us assurance (a.k.a., hope) so that we can walk forward into each day knowing that we will have God’s help for any and every situation that we will face. But, to have this hope, we need to make sure that we are always prepared.

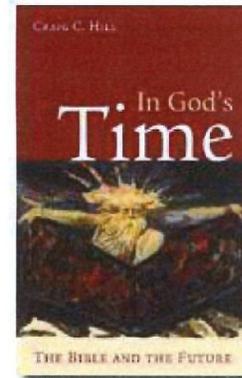
Thankfully, God has provided for our need by giving us the Holy Spirit to let us know there is help and healing available. This Holy Spirit nudges, whispers, and gives us sudden visions of God at work all around us. This Holy Spirit asks us to call for help and trust that we will receive it when we need it. This Holy Spirit is then our prayer partner communicating what we do not know how to say to our God who knows every groan and responds with tender compassion to every need.

I do not know when we will be on the other side of this pandemic. I do not know what new ways of living and relating will come from our current trials and those to come. One thing I do know and that is we will never have to worry whether there will be love to heal us, nurture us, and support us going forward. All that is required on our part is to stay connected to the one who is able to meet every need. O, Lord, may it be so.

In the love of Christ,
Pastor Braxton ><>

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