

Seeing Christ— When the Unexpected Happens

(A Journal of God's Grace and Love)

Speaker and Writer: Carol Helland

I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear;
But now my eye sees You (Job 42:5).

Introduction: Unexpected circumstances can suddenly enter my life. But God has already prepared the way for me long, long before the unexpected happens. God's ways are not my ways, but they are infinitely better!

Scripture Reading: 1 Peter 4:12-13; & 5: 6-11

Journal Entry #1: God's Protection

"The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms"
(Deuteronomy 33:27).

These are the last written words of Moses, and they focus on God's protecting Israel. Moses visualized the whole nation upheld by God. And even though Moses preached this message to the Israelites before they entered the Promised Land, I can claim this verse as well. This view of God's protection is full of inspiration and comfort. In the will of God there is divine protection that gives me peace in my heart, no matter how trying life may be. God holds Barry and me in His everlasting arms. We are upheld by God.

Journal Entry #2: God's Providential Care

"I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you (Psalm 32:8).

The Bible never questions God's care for me. It assumes it and declares it. *"Casting all your care on Him, for He cares for you"* (1 Peter 5:7). The big question is not *"Does God care for me?"* The biggest question is *"Will I recognize God's care when it comes?"* When *"the sea billows roll,"* may I run to the Word of God for reassurance. *"Never doubt in the darkness what God has told you in the light."*

Journal Entry #3: God's Provision

By this we know love; that He laid down His life for us (1 John 3:16).

God's love for me is foundational. It lets me know that He is for me. He loves me with an everlasting love. He proved His love at Calvary (John 3:16). The love of God is the diamond in the Gospel. God is the ultimate loving Father and Jesus Christ is my faithful Savior and Friend. When I have such a glorious message, no wonder I do not lose heart. My hope is tied to God's love for me. *God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8).*

Journal Entry #4: God's Presence

"Behold, the hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, each to his own home, and will leave Me alone.

Yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me (John 16:32).

The Lord Jesus has promised never to leave me alone, yet His disciples left Him alone. But Jesus knew that the Father would be with Him. But there would come a day when my Savior did feel the absence of the Father. When He was made sin for me, He was separated from the Father. He was alone that I might never be alone. He was forsaken that I might never be forsaken. My Savior sees me and knows my fears, and He is in control of the situation. He feels the burdens that I feel and knows what I am going through.

Journal Entry #5: God's Peace

"You will keep [her] in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on You, because [she] trusts in You. Trust in the LORD forever, for the LORD GOD is an everlasting rock (Isaiah 26:3-4).

Isaiah tells me where peace is to be found: Keeping my mind stayed on the LORD—looking vertically to the LORD before looking horizontally at my problems.

Peace is not the absence of something; it's the presence of Someone—my Savior. Hidden within my trial is a beautiful opportunity to recognize the One who gives me His peace: *"These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world"* (John 16:33).

Journal Entry #6: God's Promises

*"And because of His glory and excellence,
He has given us great and precious promises" (2 Peter 1:4).*

God's promises reveal His character and give me reason to trust Him. God's promises are meant to give me **hope**. They are meant to give me **courage**. They are meant to **defeat feelings of loneliness**, and **fear**, and **doubt**. They are meant to give me **peace** when I am anxious. They are meant to **settle my heart**. His promises are meant to **leave me in awe** and **wonder of the greatness of my God**. What He has promised He will do! By His promises, God invites me to run to Him and *abide under the shadow of the Almighty—my refuge and my fortress. In Him I will trust*" (Psalm 91:1-2).

Journal Entry #7: God's Power

". . . that I may know Him, and the Power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death" (Philippians 3:10).

God's "Power" in New Testament verses means "dynamo" (*dunamis* in the Greek) like the word "dynamite." Jesus Christ has not only given me the Power to defeat death but have strength to endure life's trials as well. And quite often, God's Power is quiet and steady, allowing me to endure in the midst of a trial. I need God's Power to be a caregiver to Barry when he returns home from the hospital. My life is anchored in my risen Lord

Jesus Christ. It's His Power that keeps me anchored, "steadfast and sure" (Hebrews 6:19) in the storms of life, so that I am not tossed to and fro.

Journal Entry #8: God's Purpose

"I cry out to God Most High, to God who fulfills His purpose for me" (Psalm 57:2).

By His grace, God orchestrates every detail of my life for the ultimate purpose of my spiritual good and His glory: "And we know that **all things** work together for good to those **who love God**, to those who are called **according to His purpose**" (Romans 8:28). My life's purpose is wrapped within the love of God for me. There is a purpose to the "all things" that come into my life. Therefore, I need not worry what will happen to me tomorrow or the tomorrows to come. I have a God who loves me

Journal Entry #9: Prayer

Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need (Hebrews 4:16).

When the Lord Jesus died on the Cross, rose the third day from the grave, ascended into heaven, and was seated at the right hand of God the Father, He established for me an access to the very ear of God. Jesus Christ is my Advocate, ever making intercession for me. Because of my Savior, God the Father has a good heart toward me. Prayer is a personal relationship with my heavenly Father. It's just that simple.

Journal Entry #10: God's People

"Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2).

God has made His invisible love visible through the love of His people for Barry and me. We are fellow travelers with our brothers and sisters in Christ. And on life's journey, "we are able to comfort those who are in trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God" (2 Corinthians 1:4-5). Friends allow us to invest in them. "My friends are my estate" (Emily Dickinson).

Journal Entry #11: God's Patience

"Let us run with patience the race that is set before us" (Hebrews 12:1).

The only way I can learn patience is to trust God and let Him have His way in His time. But God does not always explain what He is doing or why He is doing it. God's patience is victorious endurance under trial. I think of patience with lying down or standing still. But there is another kind of patience—the patience that runs. The Holy Spirit gives me the patience to run the race of faith, *"looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of [my] faith"* (Hebrews 12:2).

And I am so grateful for God's patience with me. He gives time for His grace to transform me into the image of Christ: *Tribulation works patience; and patience, experience, and experience, hope* (Romans 5:3-4, KJV). Oh, Father, teach me your patience, so that my heart is like that of my Savior's!

Journal Entry #12: A Song of Praise

"Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name" (Hebrews 13:15).

God gives us *"songs in the night"* (Job 35:10). There is never a song more beautiful than that which is sung in the night. Isaiah says there are *"treasures in darkness"* (Isaiah 45:3). May I not dash through this dark season and leave the treasures behind. May I bring them with me for others to see.

Someday, a storm of hallelujahs will resound around God's sapphire throne, and I will sing out with the redeemed hosts of heaven: *"To Him who sits on the Throne, and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever"* (Revelation 5:13).

This my song through endless ages, Jesus led me all the way (Fanny Crosby).

I pray that I will understand what a perfect Savior I have, and how He will each day do for me as much as He did the first day when I trusted in Him as my Savior.

"May the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you, To Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever" (1 Peter 5:10).