

FATE V. FAITH - PART 1

By Rev. Tim White, Pastor - Tri-County Christian Center, Deer Park, WA

“Well, you know, ‘everything’ happens for a reason.” This statement is a typical concluding remark to stories about various trials and hardships. But is this a statement of faith in God, or faith in something called “fate”? On the surface, this statement is a belief that there is a God-ordained purpose behind everything that happens. One level deeper, however, it implies that God has predetermined “everything” that will occur in ones’ life, and the individual just needs to roll with the punches.

The definition of “fate” is “that which is inevitably predetermined.” In other words, you have no choice about it because “fate” has pre-determined “everything” that is to happen in ones’ life. The problem with “everything” is that it would include the little girl who suffered abuse for years, or the loss of five children in a terrible accident, and the violence perpetrated upon villagers by ISIS-type militias. We would never tell them, “Oh well, you know, everything happens for a reason (i.e., a purpose ordained by God).”

Without realizing it, by using the word “everything,” we are implying that God is responsible for the evils we face, the diseases that take our loved ones, and so on. The truth is that God will work “in all things for the good” (Rom. 8:28 NIV), but that does not mean that He predetermines the “things” that have occurred in ones’ life.

Fate breeds a listless believer who just accepts difficult times as unchangeable realities. Faith (in God), on the other hand, looks at the trial or hardship, and confidently brings God into the picture as the One through whom all things are possible. Fate surrenders to the current conditions hoping that one day it may make sense. Faith stands upon the promises of Christ, who said, “Ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you” (John 14:12-14; 5:7) and believes for a better reality. Fate prays small prayers and has few testimonies of God’s power and faithfulness. Faith sees an impossibility as the stage upon which God’s greatness is revealed to all. Fate only sees what is around them, but faith in God sees what could be, long before it is a reality (Heb 11:1)

“Life happens,” in ways we have little control over. These are the times for which faith in God is designed. Prayers of faith move His hand “for the good” that ultimately transform the person in the trial. How and when God answers is up to Him, but He will answer and bring His child through, simply because he or she dared to believe God could. We may not always find the reason something happens, but we can always find God who moves mountains.

My name is Tim White, and I have been the pastor of Tri-County Christian Center in Deer Park for the last 19 years. My wife Cindi and I have six grown children and “almost” eight grandchildren. Our desire is for a genuine revival and awakening across our land. †

FATE V. FAITH - PART 2

By Rev. Tim White, Pastor - Tri-County Christian Center, Deer Park, WA

Last month I began Part 1 with this opening statement: “Well, you know, ‘everything’ happens for a reason.”— As I pointed out last month, this over-used statement is more of a belief in fate than it is about faith in a God who moves mountains in response to His Children’s prayers. Read last month’s article for more on that.

There’s another similar statement that can also create confusion, and that is, “God has everything under control.” While I believe this to be true, if taken to the wrong conclusion, one can end up, as with fate, and just accept the current realities to be unchangeable. He is in control, after all. The first casualty with this mindset is faith-filled prayer; since God is already controlling everything, why does He need me? Let us consider the view that God directs through prayer.

In June of 2015, our oldest son, Jeremy, at the age of 31, went in for knee surgery, which triggered heart failure. The only hope for him was a “mechanical heart” (LVAD) and to be put on the heart transplant list. “God has everything under control” did not mean that He caused our son’s heart to become enlarged to almost twice its size. What it did mean was that God was directing the lesser issue of a damaged knee to reveal the asymptomatic “ticking time bomb” in his chest. The Cardiologist told us that if this knee surgery had not exposed his deadly heart condition, then the next event would be, someday, he would fall over dead. What appeared to be a threat to our son’s life was actually the Father directing Jeremy’s physical realities (his knee issue) to save his life.

Romans 8:26 says that we do not know how to pray, and so “the Spirit intercedes for us with groanings that cannot be understood.” It does not say that we do not pray, but that when we pray, there are things we cannot know (i.e., about our son’s health); and the Holy Spirit takes our prayers and “fills in the blanks.” The Spirit had been “groaning” for our son as we prayed for him before all this happened. Two years later, a blood clot (and later an infection) in his LVAD threatened him again. The Doctor told us that if he got out of the hospital without having another open-heart surgery to replace the device, then “he will have won the lottery.” We did not throw up our hands and say, “God has everything under control” and go out to lunch. Instead, many people interceded for him, believing that God could win this “lottery” – and that is just what happened! The Doctor had no words.

When life gets out of control, our Heavenly Father bids us come to Him in faith, and He will work to direct those things in ways for our good and work to transform us further to be more like Christ (Rom. 8:28-29). In this directing work, God is in control. PTL!

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