

Everything's Going To Be All Right

When I was growing up in Alabama, I lived in Birmingham. Birmingham is in the middle of the state and just on the southern border of what is known as tornado alley. As the warm air from the Gulf of Mexico streams up from the south, it collides with cold air coming down from the north. This volatile mixture makes for strong thunderstorms that can produce fierce winds, damaging hail, and can spawn deadly tornadoes. Other parts of the country certainly have it worse than Birmingham, but when you're 6 years old, you don't really worry about people in Texas or Kansas, when the lightening and thunder are popping over your house.

The house we lived in did not have a basement, but it did have a safe place. There was an area just outside my parent's bedroom where if we closed the hall door, my parent's bedroom door, and the bathroom door, we were safe. At least we felt safe. There were no windows for limbs to crash through, and with the doors closed, only lightening striking near the house could make loud enough thunder to scare us—by us I mean my brother, my sister and me. We knew if thunderstorms came, that if we went into our cubbyhole, everything would be all right.

I think sometimes my parents would pretend the storms were worse than they really were just so that we would go to the cubbyhole. If the power went off they would give us a couple of candles or a flashlight, and we would play Monopoly or Clue for 1 or 2 hours until the storms passed.

As we got older, the cubbyhole lost its appeal. But the memory of feeling safe has stayed with me. I have a cubbyhole now that I go to when the storms of life frighten me. I know

when I'm there that everything will be all right. That safe place is my faith in Jesus Christ.

When we read the gospel message for today and hear Jesus say “whoever believes has eternal life...” then we have all the proof we need that everything is going to be all right. Faith is the key to our salvation. We can keep all of God's laws perfectly, but our righteousness will only keep us safe in this life. What is it that will keep us safe for all eternity? The answer is Jesus. Jesus said, “I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever, and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.

Jesus has bought us, we are his and there is nothing that will separate us from him—with the one exception that we take ourselves out of the cubbyhole. That's what Paul was trying to explain to the Ephesians in his letter. Bitterness, anger, hurtful words, lying, and stealing are all things that will take us out of God's grace. We need to be loving, kind, and willing to share what we have with others. And when we are made aware of things that we have done that are wrong in God's eyes, and when we confess our sins to God, Jesus wipes them away with his blood and we are forgiven. So what sin are you hanging onto? What is more important to you than the safety and security of knowing today that you are free death?

Is there someone who has done you wrong or hurt you so much that you can't forgive them? Well build a bridge and get over it. In the Lord's Prayer we ask God to forgive us our sins **as** we forgive those who sin against us, so if **we** are not forgiving, and we ask God to treat us the same way, then we are asking for trouble.

Remember what Paul told the Ephesians, “Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice, and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you.”

I believe Calvary United Methodist Church is coming into a new era of growth as God recognizes our love for each other. God is going to send new people to us. They will come because you invite them, or they read about us on the Internet or on Facebook, or in the newspaper. When they come they will feel welcome as if they are coming home because they will see that we understand the gospel message.

We believe in Jesus, and we know everything is going to be all right!