

Placed in God’s Hands

“I have held many things in my hands, **and I have lost them all**; but whatever I have placed in God’s hands that I still possess.”

As I begin my commentary on this reformer of long-ago, the natural reservation is that I know little about him – depending on a few reads and a movie for the most part. How can I accurately or

concisely represent what he is trying to say? Well, I can’t quite honestly, but will instead, reflect on the potential meaning in regard to my own life and circumstances.

Bearing as the title a segment of his quote, was it about “Placed in God’s Hands”, that is so important for the believer. Referring to the recent read, *Inside Out*, we cannot journey through our lives without coming to the conclusion (and lifestyle) that our faith in God is essential. **Without faith, there is no salvation...**

For Luther, what might have the “many things” been that he held in his hands? Could it have been a loved one – a wife, a child or someone else? Could it have property or possessions that had been lost for one reason or another? Finally, could it have his writings or the relics (of the church) that he so spurned as having no spiritual value or purpose? Well, whatever or whomever it was, they have been lost...or have been given-up.

Yes, when we become God’s own, we give-up the things that may have once been valuable or precious; furthermore, such things can be taken from us so as to increase our faith and hope in God alone – nothing else and no one else. As hard (if impossible) as it may seem, God’s purpose may be to do whatever he deems necessary to draw us unto him by faith...as our trust of hope.

In recent days, my “radio-recollections” have included another account of Job (from Erwin Lutzer’s *Running to Win*). Remember that he (Job) was “tested” for his faith and, in the test, lost everything...it seemed. Even his so-called friends condemned him for the bad events that had befallen him. They each had their own misunderstood reason that they gladly imparted on him; but in conclusion, God’s purpose was to allow Job’s faith to be tested. It may seem extreme for anyone to have to endure what Job went through, but we can all marvel and delight that Job – in his humanity – was able to endure to God’s purpose and Job’s restoration.

Referring to the book of Job and one account of Job’s hope (chapter 19), he says:

“God alienated my family from me; everyone who knows me avoids me. My relatives and friends have all left; houseguests forget I ever existed. The servant girls treat me like a bum off the street; look at me like they’ve never seen me before. I call my attendant and he ignores me, ignores me even though I plead with him. My wife can’t stand to be around me anymore. I’m repulsive to my family. Even street urchins despise me; when I come out, they taunt and jeer. Everyone I’ve ever been close to abhors me; my dearest loved ones reject me. **I’m nothing but a bag of bones; my life hangs by a thread.**

As bleak and distressing as his situation was (as described and understood), Job continues with the following:

“If only my words were written in a book—better yet, chiseled in stone!
Still, I know that God lives—the One who gives me back my life—and eventually he’ll take his stand on earth. And I’ll see him—even though I get skinned alive!—see God myself, with my very own eyes. Oh, how I long for that day!

Was it possible that, in spite of all his losses, that Job realized the one thing that he absolutely needed was God, the Redeemer? Perhaps like Job, Luther is telling himself (and those who may listen and heed) that whatever we think that we have earned or possess is nothing but of God – who grants to all men life itself. As with Job’s acknowledgement or affirmation of God’s existence, so too does Luther confesses that whatever he possess is in “God’s hands”.

If God created the earth, the universe and all its matter, than does he have authority over us individually – and everything we think that we possess? Well, in a word, “yes”. As we use to sing as children, he does “*have the whole world in his hands*”. That said – and believed – shouldn’t we trust God with our lives in all? Who else or what else can we trust?

Job longs for the day he will see God when “he’ll take his stand on earth.”. What a glorious moment, a revelation or Epiphany? Job has got it! He has come to the stark realization that he is not the master of his destiny; but is merely the “created” of God, the “creator”.

Here lies the truth – as God intends us to know: that nothing on earth can match the surpassing glory of God and the treasures that await those who trust in him.