

A Word on Wednesday from Pastor Tonia

"You Are Right Where You Belong – Now" 8/9/23

Now God has us where He wants us, with all the time in this world and the next to shower grace and kindness upon us in Christ Jesus. (Eph 2:7 MSG)

God saves us by Grace, through faith, it is not something we accomplish on our own, it is a gift of God. Not only the what, but the how. We are not even able to drum up enough faith. God, in His love, saves us from ourselves, our shame, our lostness, our grief. We are so sure we can do it ourselves. We read self-help books, we get angry, we go to therapy, we meet with others to vent, we cry out in agony, but we cannot save ourselves.

Yes. Therapy helps, being comforted by others eases the anguish, but when God comes to us with His comfort and peace - we find freedom. We wonder how did I end up here, now what, this can't possibly be the right destination? Well, you are right where you belong, no matter what it looks like.

We can't control what happens to us, what others do to throw us off course, but we can control how we respond. How we go forward into a new place. Yes, we grieve, we may feel anger, we may want to go hide; but we can't stay hidden; acts in anger are seldom good, and we can't live in our grief. Though it doesn't seem possible from here, life does go on.

Difficulties and losses teach us, make us stronger, prepare us for something new which we can't even imagine. Life without a loved one, starting over, a new job, now facing life - alone. Scary, impossible – but with God, totally doable. God does not cause these difficulties, these losses, but He is there in the muck and the mire with us. God is kind and He cares for us, strengthens us, prepares us, uses us. Praise God in all things.

When we are able to get up, we will see we are right where God wants us to be, gifted to handle this new challenge with a strength we didn't think was within us. As we continue we will see what we learned in the night, has prepared us to face the new day. Shown us an inner strength and ability to do things we never thought possible. We are right where we belong.

God's command for us to love ourselves and one another, to serve Him and those in need, and to reflect His love never changes. I think He gives us a bit of time to catch our breath, but He calls us back into the game.

We were not created to live within ourselves, to become housebound, ignoring those we are called to love and serve. We live in community. We are to continue loving others in spite of this turn of events. Teach others from the lessons we have learned during those times when we thought we could not continue.

Look outside yourself to see how God is showering you with love and grace in this difficult place, in the midst of your loss. Give your reactions, your first impressions to God. Allow yourself to see God's kindness, His compassion for you even now; no, especially now, here in this foreign place, where you are sure you don't belong, where you never thought you'd find yourself. Remember in all things, you are right where you belong, now. Even if you don't know where you are.

Please pray with me.

God of the storm, calm the seas around us, or at least calm the spirit within us. Help us to face the challenges in life. Strengthen us and give us wisdom to face the unknown, knowing You hold us, even in the dark. Help us to learn, cause us to gain strength and wisdom, so we can impart to others the truth of Your steadfast presence. May we know we are where we belong, now.

Amen.