

Providence and Hope

In Daniel 3, three boys are told to worship what they know to be an idol. As they speak to the king, they do not know the outcome of this story, similar to how things stand now with a wonderful little girl named Hope Peacock. With their lives, literally on the line, the boy's response comes starting in verse 16, "...our God, whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand O king. **But if not**, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up." The boys know that God can save them, but they don't know that he will.

These boys had a solid grasp on their calling here on Earth. It's easy for us to read this story, and see it play out and say to ourselves "I could do that too". But the reality is, these boys stood up for truth not knowing how it would end for them. It was very likely that it would take their life. Although they knew God could prevent that, there was no assurance that he would prevent it. So they stood their ground and focused on what their life was truly about. **God alone deserves worship.** He is the focus of our life, and although we often allow ourselves to coast through portions of our life, there are clear times when we can make a choice about what we see as our purpose on Earth. Those times often also involve intense scrutiny especially from unbelievers and from children who want to know if we truly believe what we say that we believe. The Peacock family is facing such a time now, and I believe that is also true for us as believers around them.

Hope Peacock is a fantastic young girl. I've said basically since I've met her that she is likely the friendliest child I have ever met, and that walking through the gym to the IT trailer, one of the most enjoyable things about working at Bearspaw Christian School is the "smiling with her whole countenance, two handed, every muscle in her body is involved wave" that she gave whenever I saw her in gym class. She put so much effort into it that I often felt like it might be a distraction to the whole class, so I would shyly wave back, hoping that she wouldn't get in trouble. But it made my day. Pastor Trevor and Heather have rapidly become people I would call friends. Knowing the pain they are experiencing makes me weep. All this to say that I deeply want to see Hope restored to full health.

However, as I read the updates from Trevor and Heather, I'm finding myself challenged constantly. I'll refer back to a few of the phrases we've seen being used, some over and over and over.

"May God be glorified in his plan".

"Lets remember to pray for the salvation of the doctors working on Hope"

"Lets pray that this would be clearly an act of God and they would not be able to deny it!"

"We have a mighty awesome and good God who is to be praised and worshipped in ALL things"

"May Hope's life, her story and even her name be a testament to the hope we have in Christ. It is all about Him and His glory. Praise Him for He alone is GREAT."

"...God is good and He is very present with us here. Know that and praise God with us in all things."

“Praise the Lord!”

“But pray God will sustain us (Trevor and Heather) in this trust and rest in Him for His glory.”

“We are trusting God even if we never have answers as to why this happened. We know why...Because this was God’s best plan and purpose in her life and those around her ... God is good!”

“All praise be to Him, that God would continue to be glorified through His miracles performed through Hope”

“...pray that Hope would be miraculously restored to complete health, all for the glory of God”

Hope’s illness is part of God’s plan for her life. It’s happening because a God who controls everything in the universe has ordained it to happen because when God, who knows everything, evaluated all of the potential possibilities for her life, and the lives of those around her, and how this would interact with everything else happening right now in the universe, God saw that this was the best thing to happen.

This is one of those really clear times that people see our beliefs play out in our lives. Hope is surrounded by people who want God to be glorified. Please remember as we pray that this illness is happening for a reason. It is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it. Please pray for that, and please remember that when talking about it. God uses evil and tragic events to bring himself glory. We are here to magnify that glory.

Please pray that Hope will be healed. This isn’t a call to abandon that, not by any stretch. But it is a call to remember that this is God’s plan, and that we need to bring attention to how wonderful he is through it. We need to rest in the comfort of knowing that the God who sustains every molecule in the universe also sustains Hope’s life. We need to be consistent in affirming that, even now, when we are in the midst of this storm, even as the boys were uncompromising when facing King Nebuchadnezzar. In addition to praying for Hope to be healed, pray for clear and direct opportunities for God to be glorified. Pray that in the face of a healing that they cannot explain, that doctors and nurses will come to understand the power and majesty of our Lord. Pray for rest for Trevor and Heather, that they will have strength and wisdom as opportunities present themselves to speak about Jesus. Pray that each of us will have an opportunity to talk about the power and wisdom of Jesus to those around us through this circumstance and others from our own lives, both good and bad. Pray that this will imprint in each one of us the deep need and the importance of Christ in our lives, how deeply dependent we are on him every second of every day. Pray that we will remember our dependence on Christ with gratitude each time we are with those we love. Pray that you and I can each become better at drawing attention to how wonderful God is through our lives and our words and our actions each day as we live out our time here on Earth for the God who created and sustains us. Pray, even as Christ did, that not our will, but His be done. Pray that our hearts will be conformed, and brought into alignment with his will, even in difficult times.

As a community of believers, we need to prepare our students for tribulations, because bad things will come to their lives. There is an opportunity here to teach those watching us how to respond, especially as they see us modeling that for them in our own lives.