

NEWS FROM PASTOR PAUL - - FEBRUARY 2019

Greetings and Happy February!

Hoping everyone has been able to stay safe and warm this winter. It has truly been a roller coaster weather wise. Weekends in the 60s and weekdays in the 20s...or lower. Just as you think the calendar is set, the temperature drops, the ice shows up and the plans get put aside for another day. Weather isn't the only thing that feels like a roller coaster at times. Life too seems to often have its fair share of ups and downs. And like a roller coaster, and often like the weather, life can surprise us with those ups and downs.

We may find ourselves challenged by anything from running a little late, to a pressing deadline to an illness, to a unforeseen car repair, to the loss of a job to the loss of a loved one and everything in between the unexpected challenges of life, just as the expected challenges, can find us holding on with every last ounce of strength just to make it through each day. It is often easy to forget the better times when going through the tough times.

I can remember one time from my youth when I felt there was so much bad going on in the world, that I began to wonder why there was so much more bad than good. It bothered me so much that I prayed long and hard about it. Then, I waited for God's still speaking voice with a reply. It came that weekend when the sermon at church was about good and bad in the world. Although I can't remember what scripture the pastor preached on, I can remember the message. The pastor reminded us that there isn't more bad than good; instead, the bad is just more noticeable than the good. The bad simply makes its presence known. That's true about the character of bad too. It wants you to notice it and focus on it while good is a little more selfless.

It's a good thing that with all the ups and downs that we have one thing that is constant. Of course, I'm talking about God. As Psalm 136:23-26 reminds us, "God remembered us when we were down, His love never quits. Rescued us from the trampling boot, His love never quits. Takes care of everyone in time of need. His love never quits. Thank God, who did it all! His love never quits!" (MSG) And through our trials and tribulations, through our ups and downs, we need to remember just that. That God's love never quits. Indeed, God's love endures forever. And that through our ups and downs, not only do we have God's love, we have the gifts that God has given us in each other, our church family of sisters and brothers who are there to, with the help of the Holy Trinity, carry us through any ups and downs that life may challenge us with.

Yes, ups and downs are a constant of life. Just remember that God and our sisters and brothers in Christ are God's constants that will help us through those ups and downs. Remember 1 John 4:9-12, "My beloved friends, let us continue to love each other since love comes from God. Everyone who loves is born of God and experiences a relationship with God. The person who refuses to love doesn't know the first thing about God, because God is love—so you can't know him if you don't love. This is how God showed his love for us: God sent his only Son into the world so we might live through him. This is the kind of love we are talking about—not that we once upon a time loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to clear away our sins and the damage they've done to our relationship with God.

My dear, dear friends, if God loved us like this, we certainly ought to love each other. No one has seen God, ever. But if we love one another, God dwells deeply within us, and his love becomes complete in us—perfect love!" (MSG) Do the best to enjoy the roller coaster that is life and always remember that you are never alone. With God by your side, it will be okay.

Blessings and peace,
Pastor Paul