

James Goll: Why God Is Always Good—No Matter What

I had what you might call a divine appointment.

One morning, the Holy Spirit interrupted my thinking with the strong sense that I should leave the house and drive over to a local commercial establishment called The Factory, where I would meet somebody.

I was reluctant to stir myself; I was feeling kind of down, and it seemed as if it might be a waste of time. But the Holy Spirit was persistent, so I went out the door just the same because I have learned that these things often prove to be from God.

The Factory is a handful of upscale shops, places to eat and other enterprises housed in a collection of refurbished warehouses.

I decided to head to a café I knew, where I could order something and just sit a while. So, I got my organic, freshly made juice and a little bowl filled with nuts and fruits, and I sat down with it.

Another customer came in, and he stopped and looked at me. “Are you, like, could you maybe be James Goll?”

I did my Clark Kent routine because you never know who you might be talking to: “Well, sometimes.”

He asked if we could sit down together. Turns out he was an old friend.

We hardly recognized each other because it had been at least 25 years since we had last seen each other. Even though both of us had lived in the same general area for the past 18 years, our paths had not crossed.

We had actually gone together on a mission trip to Moscow all those years ago. Since we had last seen each other, both of us had gone gray (in my case, also sparse on top), and it wasn't only because of the passage of years.

We caught each other up on all that had happened in the past two decades. I told him my story in brief, and then he told me his.

This man was absolutely broken. He had been married when we had traveled to Russia, but afterward he had gone through a divorce, lost his job and a lot more. His ex-wife had just died two years ago, and now he was grappling with some new challenges. He was still a believer, but he had pretty much lost his hope.

Everything seemed to keep going so very wrong.

I thought of Job, so I shared with him a passage from the Book of Job that had become meaningful to me: "For there is hope for a tree, if it is cut down, that it will sprout again, and that its tender shoots will not cease" (Job 14:7).

I also told him to read the next two verses, although I was actually uncertain about what they said.

As it turns out, those two verses are quite significant: "Though its root may grow old in the earth, and its stump may die in the ground, yet at the scent of water it will bud and bring forth boughs like a plant" (Job 14:8–9).

We were sort of like two old stumps, he and I, somewhat lifeless and seemingly uncared for.

And yet the message of our always-good God is that he wants to bring life back.

He can revive and restore even what appears to be cut down to its roots. At the mere scent of divine water, God's miracles can happen!

Neither of us had experienced full restoration yet, but we could have hope.

By bringing us together in a “chance” meeting, God brought both of us closer to being able once again to “bud and bring forth boughs like a plant.”

Out of His goodness, God showed us that he cares, even if we still look like a couple of weathered stumps in the ground (at a health food café, no less!).

God Is Good

No matter what comes, God is good.

He doesn't stop being good when my life falls apart, even when I happen to be at fault for some of my troubles.

He doesn't stop being good when I forget he is good or if I never understand in the first place that he is good.

God Is Good, Period

Each one of us needs to ask the Holy Spirit to graft that truth into our souls because otherwise we will continue to wobble in our faith.

We do not yet know God anywhere near as well as he knows us, but he would like us to come closer to knowing him well. To know him is to love him and to believe that he cares.

To help myself remember this truth, I long ago adopted as one of my life verses this passage.

“I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe” (Eph. 1:18-19a, NASB).

I pray it for myself on a daily basis because I know that

unless God enlightens the eyes of my heart, I will never arrive at the hope of his calling, nor will I have any comprehension of the riches of His goodness toward me and toward anyone who believes in Him.

Whenever you go through difficult times, pray the Bible.

It works. It opens the eyes of your heart.

Don't ask me how it works, but somehow two plus two equals five.

With God, all things are possible (Matt. 19:26, Mark 10:27), and He easily factors in our human weaknesses.

He is both sovereign and providential—and He providentially chose to give us human beings a free will, risking our likely revolt.

He knows what we do to each other. He knows what the devil does to us.

He's still God, and He loves us.

He knows how everything will come out in the end.

He takes the hands of those who ask Him to guide them, and the shepherd of our soul will restore to them the years that seemed to have been lost forever. {eoa}

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