



REFLECTIONS

January 6, 2013

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

Romans 8:28

New Chapters

Each year seems to begin with anticipation and renewed hope, and ends with the celebration of its conclusion. And so it is that we have celebrated the conclusion of a year with whatever successes and disappointments it brought and lessons learned and taught. All are in preparation of a new chapter. But new chapters seldom are fully new. There is a link between the freshness and hope of them with what has come before. There are successes cheered in prior times that prove to be no victories at all. And there are trials faced and losses suffered that later reveal themselves as blessings to build on.

For me, one such blessing came well over a decade ago when cancer invaded my being. It was a shock then and the battle ensued. Now, looking back in time, the impending uncertainty was a test of faith and the treatment a trial of endurance. But what a blessing it was to be! How else would I have felt God's presence so deeply even with the outcome uncertain? How else would I have been prepared to come alongside those facing trials of many kinds if I had not walked at least a short mile in their shoes? A new chapter had begun.

Now the blessings from those trying days still unfold before me, and yes, healing is among them. But unlike new years, new chapters don't really follow a schedule. They can begin with a phone call, a news flash, or a heartbeat. And they bring with them an endless parade of challenges in our travels through our lifetime.

New chapters come in the form of victories that open new doors, or through adversities that lock them. Passing years help to reduce pain, to soften scars, and to find ways to cope with many of the imponderables presented day after day. But there comes a time in every life when the challenges are too great to face alone. We need a Savior.

Jesus was at my side when cancer reared its ugly head. He was there to give me assurance to face the treatments before me. He was there to give me strength when I could not lift my head; and He stood among the cheerleaders when healing came. But healing was not the greatest blessing. The blessing was the Savior at my side.

New chapters in our lives begin with anticipation and renewed hope. Jesus is the one on which our hope rests. And Jesus will be alongside when we celebrate its conclusion, no matter the success or disappointment it may bring. The victory is in him.

Thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

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Richard +

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