



REFLECTIONS

November 29, 2015

...but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.

Genesis 50:20

Bad Things

“Once upon a time...” The fairytale opening brings back fond memories of childhood. Those stories told of bad things happening, but in the end a slipper would fit, bread crumbs would lead to rescue, or a kiss would turn a frog into a handsome prince. Everyone would live happily ever after; and that is the part we remember. But before the happy part, bad things happened.

Remember Joseph? A coat of many colors ordained him as his father’s favorite son. So one might think life would be good for Joseph. But the show of favoritism divided the household and bad things happened. Consumed with jealousy, Joseph’s ten older brothers wanted to rid themselves of him; so at the first opportunity they sold their father’s favorite son into slavery. Thus began a long series of injustices that befell Joseph.

And remember Moses? He grew up in royalty before bad things happened that chased him into the desert. He stayed there for 40 years. Then there is the story of Daniel. What must it have been like to be carried into captivity, tossed into a fiery furnace, and face the horrific prospects of a lions’ den.

Before happily ever after, some very bad things happened to our heroes. But without those bad things it is unlikely we would ever have known our heroes at all. They are our heroes today not for the bad things that happened. They are heroes because of the spirit displayed in facing them.

Injustice did not dampen Joseph’s faith. Forty years in the desert did not mean that God had no plans for Moses. And threats of horrific death did not weaken Daniel’s love of God. Those are the stories of our heroes. Without the bad things, Joseph, Moses, and Daniel would never have been heroes at all. Bad things formed the foundation on which they set examples for all who followed them in this world.

Bad things happen to us all. But as difficult as those times are to work through, bad things offer a foundation for lessons to teach—lessons that define our lives and set examples for those who follow us.

And isn’t that a mark on life we are called to make.

You are the light of the world,

Richard +

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