

## WHY IT TURNED OUT GOOD

I received a compliment recently for doing a good job from one of the parents on my basketball team. The compliment was a result of being able to arrange three upcoming exhibition games. It may sound easy to do but it is very complicated in my case because most teams want to have these games on Sunday mornings. It might be convenient for these teams to play on Sunday mornings but not for this pastor who happens to coach as well.

I had been trying to arrange exhibition games since January with various teams but to no avail. I sent out an e-mail to my players and parents in mid-March explaining to them my lack of success in finding exhibition games to play. After I sent the e-mail I prayed and asked God to help me fulfill my players' wishes to have a few exhibition games. It did not take long for this prayer to be answered.

The very next day I received an e-mail from a coach in Guelph who was interested in playing us. We found a Monday night in April that worked for both teams. The very next day I received another e-mail from a coach in Hamilton looking for games. I had never heard of this basketball team before. A few e-mails later we had arranged for two exhibition games. A few days earlier I had no exhibition games, and now I had three. Many of the parents commented how surprised they were to see the follow up e-mail sharing with them this good news. This led to the one parent complimenting me for doing a good job. I appreciated the compliment, but I realized it was God who did the good job. All I did was pray. God did the good job in answering the prayer by making these three games happen.

It should not come as a surprise to anyone of us how prayer can result in good things happening. In fact, we would not have "Good Friday" if it were not for prayer. Jesus showed a lot of courage entering into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday knowing full well that He would suffer and die on the cross later that week. After Jesus celebrated the Passover and Last Supper with His disciples, He went to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray. The thought of soon having to take hold of the cup of suffering by enduring the agony of crucifixion was overwhelming Jesus as the time approached. Jesus prayed and asked:

**Father, if You are willing, please take this cup of suffering away from me. Yet I want Your will to be done, not mine. (Luke 22:42)**

Jesus was very emotional here. Luke shared how intensely Jesus prayed, and that His spirit and emotions were in such agony that His sweat fell to the ground like great drops of blood. It is important to understand that Jesus was not trying to get out of His mission to save us from our sins but was asking if there was a way to accomplish this other than the agony of the cross. Jesus made this same request three times that night in the garden. God did not change His will nor the mission here, but according to Luke an angel from heaven appeared to strengthen and comfort Jesus. This time in prayer was good for Jesus and for us. He got up after praying and showed courage, conviction, and devotion in fulfilling His mission to die on the cross so that our sins would be forgiven, and we would no longer be separated from the Father. Prayer led to that Friday Jesus died on the cross now being called "Good."

**Here we have two examples where prayer led to good things:**

- *a prayer in a garden by Jesus on a Thursday that led to a Friday now being called Good,*
- *a prayer by a pastor and basketball coach that led to three exhibition games coming together so quickly when before there were none.*

The credit for doing a good job in both cases goes to God the Father. Regardless of whether the prayer comes from His Son, or one of His children like us, we can always count on God to answer. Sometimes God will answer that prayer quickly and suddenly like He did in my case, and other times we may have to patiently wait on the timing He deems best. We also need to understand that God may answer the prayer in a way that is different from our will, as we see in the case with Jesus. Even if this is the case we will acknowledge afterward, once again, our Father did a good job.

Prayer on Jesus' part resulted in God turning what appeared at first to be a bad Friday into a good one. Prayer on my part resulted in me seeing God provide some much-needed exhibition games for my team. May these reminders as this Good Friday approaches encourage us to keep prayer an important aspect of our daily lives. By so doing we will always be reminded of the good job God does both in listening and answering it according to His will and timing.

Keep Safe and God Bless

Pastor Dean