

12/19/10

Jesus Can Make Things Right – Psalm 46:1

- Have you ever been in a really tight spot...and had somebody come up and put their arm around you and say...It's going to be all right?...
- we probably all have...that's a fairly common way to express to comfort to a person in their time of need...
- but my guess is that if we went around the room – some people here would say...yes, I remember a time when that was said to me and I found it to be a source of great comfort...
 - I responded by saying – thank you for reminding me of that great truth...
- while others could tell stories of hearing those exact same words during a time of trial...and you found them to be trite...hollow...almost, offensive...
 - your response might have been – how could you possibly say that right now...this is going to be anything but all right...
- what makes the difference?...they're the exact same words...
 - there's a lot of different answers to that question, I'm sure...
 - but here's one of them...the knowledge and the experience and the resources of the person making the statement...
 - if it's someone who has no idea what they're talking about...how does that help?...
 - but on the other hand...if the person really knows it's going to be OK, or they've been in this exact situation and they came through it OK, or they have the ability to make it right...all of sudden those words have an entirely different impact on you...
 - they give direction, and comfort, and hope...
 - it's going to be all right...
- we're coming up on a very important date in the Viars' family next month...our son Andrew's 18th birthday...
 - We've always viewed Drew as a special gift from God so we look forward to celebrating that important milestone in his life...
 - but it also reminds us of what happened about 4 weeks after he was born...
 - we adopted him at birth...and it's the middle of the winter...and he was kind of croupy...he was stuffed up and not breathing real well...
 - and every parent knows what it is like to try to decide...should we call the doctor or not?...
 - those are such hard decisions to have to make...
 - and we had been advised to run hot water in the bathroom at night and create basically a steam bath and supposedly that would open up his airways...
 - Kris did that one night and came in and said – Steve – it seems like Drew stops breathing from time to time...
 - and we watched for a while and sure enough that's what was happening...
 - and we try not to do things like this...but we were frightened so we called Dr. Thomas, a pediatrician from our church...and we described the symptoms...
 - and he encouraged us to take Drew to the hospital and said that he would meet us there...
- at that point we were thinking – well, maybe we'll have to do some sort of breathing treatment or something...
- in the next couple of hours, we learned that it was a lot bigger deal than we realized...

- because his breathing problem wasn't because of the croup, it was because he was dehydrated...
 - and the reason he was so dehydrated was because his kidneys weren't working...
 - all of a sudden we're now dealing with what appeared to be a life or death issue and we were scared to say the least...
- for the rest of the day Dr. Thomas kept doing all sorts of tests...
 - it was really one of those when you come to appreciate the scientific aspect of medicine...
 - because he walking us down the diagnostic tree to determine why Drew's kidneys weren't working...
 - and within 25 hours he knew...
 - the ultimate problem wasn't his breathing...
 - and the ultimate problem wasn't his kidneys...
 - the problem was his pituitary gland...which either was non-existent or wasn't producing the necessary hormone to tell his kidneys to work...
 - and he's explaining this to us – and our heads are just spinning...how did Dr. Thomas go from the lungs, to the kidneys, to the pituitary gland that quickly...that's simply amazing...
 - and then he said – the good news is – an artificial hormone has been developed that simulates the same effect as what a healthy pituitary gland produces on his own...and we need to get Drew on that right away...
 - but...and I'm not sure he used these exact words or not...but his point was certainly this – it's going to be all right...it's going to be all right...
 - the reason those words had such a powerful impact on us was...if the man who was able to connect the dots that quickly about the specific nature of Drew's problem is also aware of a solution that has been proven to work...we're going to take comfort in his words...
 - it's going to be all right...
- now let me ask you this – have you figured out that we have a problem in this world?...
 - that things are [as theologian Cornelius Plantenga so famously said] not the way they're supposed to be...
- I'm not talking about a breathing problem, or a kidney problem, or a pituitary problem...I'm talking about a soul problem...
- something is desperately wrong with our relationship with God, and our relationship with one another...
- there's evidence of that every place you turn...
- we're coming up on another Christmas where men and women from our armed forces will be away from their families serving in harm's way...why?...because things aren't the way they're supposed to be...
- A well known diplomat Richard Holbrooke appeared to be reasonably healthy last week as he continued his work to promote peace in Afghanistan and around the world and this week held his funeral...things are not the way they're supposed to be...
- even on a ridiculous level...a pro football team is losing the game so as a running back goes by, one of the Jet's coaches actually trips the player on the opposing team on live television...what was he thinking...things are not the way they're supposed to be...

- but listen...we all know that we don't have to look at world events or professional sports to make this point...we just have to look in the mirror...at our own souls...at our own thoughts and relationships...
- is there anybody who can look at that mess and with authority say – It's going to be all right...
 - it can be all right...
- we all know the answer to that, don't we?...not some pastor...not some other human being at all..it's the God of heaven and earth...
- in the musical we're about to enjoy together...one of the verses of Scripture you'll hear is this one:
 - **Psalm 46:1 - God *is* our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.**
 - it's possible to say of your relationship with the Lord, or your relationships with other people, or some specific trial you may be facing right now...it's going to be all right...
- now, why should we believe that?...
 - here's some reasons...
 - God knows the exact nature of the problem...far better than you or me...
 - why aren't things...the way they're supposed to be?...
 - because we live in a world that is cursed by sin...and we are born with a sinful nature beating in our breasts...
- did your mom have to teach you how to lie?...did she have to teach you how to disobey?...did she have to teach you how to rebel?...
- no, that was part of your standard equipment...
 - that's why we sin and that's why we suffer...
 - God because He is Holy, understands that far better than we...just like Dr. Thomas, because he is a physician, was able to cut through all the issues and come up with the precise diagnosis...
- are you willing to accept God's analysis of the problem?...if not, I have to love you enough to tell you, it's not going to be all right...
- Kris and I could have continued to do the steamy air in the bathroom thing all night long but it would have never helped our son...in fact it very well could have taken his life...
- but that's not the end of the story...that's why we have Christmas...because God loved us so much that He sent His Son to be the antidote...the substitute...the payment for our sin...
- that's why the Psalmist also said -- **Psalm 40:2-3 - He also brought me up out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, And set my feet upon a rock, and established my steps. He has put a new song in my mouth— Praise to our God; many will see *it* and fear, and will trust in the LORD.**
- and how does God do that?...through a personal decision to accept the gift of Jesus Christ...
 - to trust Him as your Lord and Savior...
 - to let His shed blood be the payment for your sin...
 - to make Him the Lord of your life...
 - and for a person who's made that decision – there's great joy...
 - because of what Jesus has done for us...with authority we can say – it's going to be all right...

Closing Comments

- you know, when Dr. Thomas came in and explained his diagnosis...it wasn't easy to accept...

- this wasn't a little breathing problem that could be solved with a minor treatment now and then...
- this problem was significant...and the treatment was radical...

- as parents, we could have ignored what was occurring...we could have rejected the diagnosis because it was too severe...or ignored the treatment and hoped things would get better on their own...

- but obviously we didn't...and now we have the joy of celebrating Drew's 18th birthday...
- friend, here's my question for you...
 - have you been willing to accept God's diagnosis of the problem?...
 - have you made a personal decision at a point in time to trust Christ as your Savior and Lord?...
 - and are you continuing to grow in Him?

- can you say with integrity this am – it's going to be all right?