

# Washington church of Christ

27 Grand Avenue, Washington, NJ 07882

Phone: 201-546-1284

[washingtonnjchurchofchrist.com](http://washingtonnjchurchofchrist.com)

# The Washington Messenger

Volume 2 – Number 42

**December 22, 2013**

## Order of Services

### Sunday December 22, 2013

Song Leader	Derald Sanchez
Prayer	Bill Duryea
Preaching	Bob James
Lord's Supper	
Prayer for the Bread	Scott Thomas
Prayer for the Cup	Bob Celentano
Prayer for the Collection	Daniel Wydro
Assisting at the Table	Bob Celentano Jr.
Scripture Reading	Bob James
Morning Closing Prayer	Bob Wydro
Evening Opening Prayer	Pete Ferencze
Announcements	Stan Thompson

## Schedule of Weekly Services

Sunday Morning Bible Classes	9:30 am
Sunday Morning Worship	10:30 am
Sunday Evening Worship	6:00 pm
Wednesday Evening Bible Classes	7:30 pm
Thursday Morning Bible Study	11:00 am

## What is God Thinking?

It is not uncommon to hear of, or even witness, the actions of someone and to respond with the phrase "What were they thinking?" And, even we may at times reflect on our own actions, and in light of their inappropriateness wonder to ourselves ... "What was I thinking?"

It might then be said that to others, if not to ourselves, we all from time to time do things that seem to defy common logic, and cause bewilderment as to the rationale or purpose of our actions.

I probably could never argue successfully the wisdom behind all of my own actions, let alone the actions of others. But I would ask this question ... Do we ever wonder what God is thinking when He does something, or allows something to happen? Have we ever questioned the wisdom or purpose of something that He has allowed to occur in our lives?

*"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," says the LORD.*

*"For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts. (Isaiah 55:8-9 NKJV)*

The context of the above passage deals primarily with the subject of pardon, and should be interpreted as such. However, the statement God make here is also true of His ways in general. His ways are not our ways, and his thoughts are not ours.

God's thoughts and His ways are not simply human thoughts and ways raised to the divine level. They cannot be referred to as a supernatural extension of the natural. There is a distinct difference between the thoughts and ways of God and those of man. God thinks as we cannot think, and He acts in ways that we cannot act.

He has plans for accomplishing his purposes which are different from ours, and he maintains our own wellbeing through schemes that are vastly different from those we might employ.

Because God works in ways that are so different to our thoughts even to the point of at times being incomprehensible, our faith in Him can often be tested by events in our lives.

In his commentary on Isaiah 55:8-9, Albert Barnes says this of God's ways; "He disappoints our hopes; foils our expectations; crosses our designs; removes our property, or our friends; and thwarts our purposes in life. He leads us in a path which we had not intended: and secures our ultimate happiness in modes which are contrary to all our designs and desires. "

In Genesis chapters 37 through 50 the Bible relates the story of Joseph in which we read both good and bad. He was loved by his father, and hated by his brothers; sold into slavery, and owned by a benevolent master; falsely imprisoned, and made 2<sup>nd</sup> in command to Pharaoh.

Joseph's commitment of faith to the Lord had been obvious throughout his life, but perhaps the greatest evidence of his faith is found in the statement made to his brothers when they came to him after the death of Jacob their father. They were worried that Joseph would seek vengeance upon them for selling him into slavery now that their father was dead, and came to him begging for mercy. Joseph's response ...

*Joseph said to them, "Do not be afraid, for am I in the place of God? **But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive.*** (Genesis 50:19, 20 NKJV)

Joseph reminded his brothers that even though they had done him evil, the Lord had never lost control and it was He who had been working out His eternal purposes even in their arrogant and shameful behavior.

To say this is one thing ... to believe it in theory is another ... but for Joseph to persistently hold on to it in the dark days of betrayal and the lonely years in prison is faith of the highest order. Joseph had not moved an inch from this conviction. The faith of his youth continued into his maturity.

Also, consider the Apostle Paul ... in 2Corinthians 12 he details the remarkable vision from God which he had several years before when he was *caught up* to heaven, and permitted to behold the wonders there ... and almost in the next breath Paul told of the *"thorn in the flesh"* (2Corinthians 12:7). This is not accidental, for it seems that he felt the two experiences were related to each other.

Paul seemed to believe that the "thorn" was given to him to keep him from being excessively proud of *"the abundance of the revelations"* he had received (2Corinthians 12:7). He does clearly state that he gave himself to earnest and repeated prayer that the thorn might depart (2Corinthians 12:8). Instead of removing the "thorn" God gave the reassurance of His grace and reminded Paul that His strength was *"made perfect in weakness"* (2Corinthians 12:9). Paul never came to feel that the thorn in itself was a good thing, believing rather that it was *"a messenger of Satan"* (2Corinthians 12:7). But he did come to that place in his life where he could see how God's grace could transform what was bad into something good in his life.

I think that this is the principle that Paul is stating in Romans 8:28 ...

*And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.* (Romans 8:28 NKJV)

The Apostle is not saying that everything that happened was good ... let's face it ... bad things happen to good people. And he wasn't saying that everything that happened was necessarily what God had purposefully willed to happen. But out of experience Paul learned that God could take our weaknesses and use them to demonstrate His power.

Paul was affirming that there is nothing that can happen to one of God's children that, if we turn to Him with it, He cannot take us from where we are and begin working some good. God doesn't build a wall around us to isolate us from the risk of harm, but He does surround us with a grace that enables us to transform anything that happens to us.

Let us as God's children live each day without questioning the purpose or reasoning of events over which we have no control. Rather let us have the conviction of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego when they were faced with disobeying God or holding on to their faith and being thrown into the fiery furnace ...

*Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king.* (Daniel 3:16-17 NIV)

### ***Our Prayer List...***

**For Spiritual Responsiveness** – All of our wayward members ...  
Georgia DeLorenzo ... Sondra DeLorenzo

**For Physical Healing** – John Baxter ... Larry Smith (Sharon Ferencze's brother) ... Frank and Antoinette Salerno (Annie's parents) ... Mary Celentano's father

**For Wisdom and Good Judgment** – The Leaders of our congregation ... the leaders of our nation

**For God's Care and Good Providence** – Our young people away at college ... Our young people here at Washington ... our members who are traveling ... the men and women in military service ... our congregation.

## ***EVENTS AND NOTES***

UPCOMING EVENTS THAT WE ARE AWARE OF ARE ...

- ▲ THE FLASH-MOB HYMN SING ON DECEMBER 28<sup>TH</sup> SPONSORED BY THE CHURCH IN EXTON. THERE IS FLYER ON THE BULLETIN BOARD.
- ▲ STAN THOMPSON IS SCHEDULED TO PRESENT THE MORNING LESSON ON SUNDAY, JANUARY 5<sup>TH</sup>.
- ▲ THE NEXT MEN'S BUSINESS MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR SUNDAY, JANUARY 5<sup>TH</sup>, STARTING AT 4PM.
- ▲ ADDITIONALLY, THE LADIES BIBLE STUDY IS SCHEDULED FOR JANUARY 5<sup>TH</sup> AS WELL ... STARTING AT 4PM.
- ▲ OUR NEXT THURSDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY WILL BE ON JANUARY 9<sup>TH</sup>, 2014 AT 11:00AM.