

# **Voices: God always has the final word**

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Many of us live in fear. We hide our concerns yet internally reflect, “In the event of a catastrophe, I could not survive.”

If I am divorced, if someone dies, if I lose my job, if my child is a prodigal son or daughter, if I get cancer or have a heart attack, I could not bear it. I have no reserves, no Plan B that will withstand what I fear.

Yet if we live long enough, catastrophes happen.

## **Does living in fear help us deal better with trouble?**

No. We can never prepare for the exact trial we will face. Worrying about everything that could happen consumes all the energy we have for a productive life. Anxiety makes every battle worse and harder.

Think of Bible figures who found themselves in trouble — in the lions’ den, the fiery furnace, the pit; a young woman pregnant and unmarried, a son crucified, a disciple exiled. Scripture is full of apparent tragedy and fatal finality God reversed to bring salvation.

God has the last word, always. His power to boomerang or reverse what humans meant for evil and use it for good has saved his people (Romans 8:28; Genesis 50:20).

As we walk with God and learn to trust him, it is helpful to consider:

# God may see situations differently than we do.

How can we think like God? Impossible. Yet as we study his word, we see God act decisively to accomplish his will. His acts may be quick or “in the fullness of time” — woven through generations.

His purpose will not be thwarted (Job 42:2). The depth and riches of his knowledge are inscrutable, unfathomable (Romans 11:33). His eyes constantly roam over the earth to support fully those who are fully his (2 Chronicles 16:9).

# God works through people of his choosing.

If someone tells us they are God’s chosen, we are skeptical. In his sovereignty, God may choose the humble, less-famous person to carry his word and establish his work (1 Corinthians 1:27-29). God uses people who bring glory to him. He uses people with pure hearts who are fit vessels to carry the gospel. He uses people he can work with, people who can reach others with humility and transforming love.

On the other hand, the Bible tells us God used a foreign king like Pharaoh “to save many people.” (Exodus 6:1) Notice that *God’s mighty power* to use Pharaoh is explained by God himself.

That gives me security and hope in trusting him because I know he has perfect timing in every situation and the mighty power to act.

# **God does not make deals.**

Christians love formulas. If we do this, God will do that.

Playing “let’s make a deal” to solve a problem is the opposite of trusting him. His ways are higher than ours, with more dimension than we can imagine. Over time and place, over people and powers, throughout the universe, he reigns, as if he has “pitched a tent for the sun” (Psalm 19). The heavens declare his glory, which no human will share.

The Bible shows us principles to follow in relationships, missions and the church. But God blesses, as the wind of the Spirit blows where it will. Walking with God, we learn what a privilege it is to experience him and be included in his work. Anything God does is wonderfully great, and to be in his service is the significance of life, the abundance of life Christ came to give us.

Worshipping him in praise and giving, through ministry like feeding the hungry, praying for the sick, accepting the stranger, washing feet, sharing the gospel. The highest tasks in the kingdom are things we can all do. Male or female, old or young, educated or not, God our Father uses everyone in his family. What a beautiful thing that is! Acts of loving service define and strengthen us, the church, and populate heaven.

# **Fear must never distract us from our calling.**

God’s word, his very presence in Christ, is fully sufficient. He will speak to you, for you and act on your behalf. Give him your whole heart, even the paralyzing and embarrassing fear.

Ask him to reveal himself in your life, regardless of your expectations for

restoration. Ask him to bring glory to himself. That is a prayer the creator answers because he loves his world.

I am a cancer survivor. God has the final say as to what my life and death will be. He leads, as I follow, for whatever days remain. That is what his lordship means as we face the future together — with more illness likely.

Catastrophic derailment for him is just another term for redemption opportunity. What equations in life that he gives us, he will solve.

When I was first diagnosed with breast cancer, my oncologist said: “You do not worry about this cancer. Let me worry about it!”

My job was to accept chemo and radiation and follow her lead in the treatment plan. God is like that doctor. He tells us to live, but not to worry. Leave things with him. He bears the burdens of his children. Our job description is obedience to him.

Soon I will have another surgery for a different kind of cancer. Fear is real. I feel it, but I will not pitch a tent there and move in. That is a choice.

God’s grace, his presence and powerful help, will be enough (2 Corinthians 12:9). The thorn, the tumor even, in my flesh connects me to my healer, and teaches the lesson of being sustained by Christ in the Spirit. I pray I can stand firm and steady in the love of God until he calls my name.

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