The Providence Of God In Our Lives

A short story about a trip that had a purpose that I had never envisioned.

"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding." Proverbs 3:5

Introduction

This is a story about how God works in our lives to accomplish His purposes. It is a true story with some vivid examples of how God orchestrates circumstances in our lives for our good and for His glory. Sometimes God allows us to see those purposes on this side of eternity. This story is about one of those times.

God starts to create some connections for me

Back in the early 1990s my brother had a friend who was doing – and dealing – drugs and who may have stepped on the toes of other drug dealers in his area to the point of scaring him into moving far way, ending up in the state of Arizona. Well people who are on that wide road often create very big problems for themselves and that man's troubles went with him out west. He soon ended up in prison. Since he was friends with my brother, he and my brother kept in touch by mail. And since my brother was living with me at the time, I was able to also correspond with the man in jail in Arizona. Since the man was not a Christian, he was not particularly fond of hearing everything I had to say in my letters but he still appreciated my concern for him. He soon directed me to 2 other inmates he knew, who he said were Christians, and so I started writing to them also. This was in 1993. Since these Christian inmates were helping the prison chaplain with church services I was able to get to know the chaplain a little bit by phone and by letter, enough to be able to arrange a visit to the prison to see my brother's friend and the 2 other inmates. Unfortunately, shortly before I visited the prison, my brother's friend got transferred to another prison in that large prison system in Arizona. But still, I was at least able to have a visit with the chaplain and both the Christian inmates who were working with him.

God opens the door for an in-person visit to a prison far away

Now it was wonderful enough that God had led me to those two inmates for me to disciple and encourage from over 2,000 miles away. But in 1997 God opened the doors of the prison for my visit in a way that could not possibly

ever happen again – after the World Trade Center attacks of 2001. When I arrived at the prison, I met the chaplain at the door. I was briefly frisked to see if I was carrying anything hidden and then the chaplain proceeded to escort me into the prison, then out to an open courtyard with several inmates milling around and then back into the prison on the other side of the courtyard. I then arrived at the chaplain's office where the two Christian inmates were waiting to see me. It was wonderful to finally see in-person, the men I had been corresponding with by mail for so long. And my visit into that prison was absolutely amazing since that kind of freedom during a prison visit is probably unheard of today, in our "post-9-11" world. But there is an even more amazing part of this story.

God orchestrates a meeting with a burdened brother-in-the-Lord

When I first arrived in Arizona, I rented a car and checked into a hotel. It was definitely a nice hotel but not what you would call a bargain. I had a good night's rest at that hotel. It was a Saturday night, so the next day was Sunday. What church would I go to since I was a stranger to Tucson, Arizona? I did not think to ask the chaplain about me attending *his* church. Well, I can't exactly remember how, but I may have looked in the yellow pages in a phone book at the hotel, for a church, and I was pretty familiar and comfortable with most Baptist churches so I found a fairly good-sized Baptist church in downtown Tucson to visit that Sunday morning. After the service I hung around to talk to people, which is customary for me. I met a very nice man about my age who I told my story to about my trip – to visit the prison out there. He proceeded to invite me to stay with him, for free, for the entire week. So I readily agreed. He was renting a cottage in Tucson, so after I checked out of my hotel I went to that man's cottage to rest for the night. The accommodations were a bit humble: I slept on a mattress on the floor but I could not believe how well rested I felt when I got up in the morning. That first morning this new friend invited me to accompany him on his rounds as a private electrical contractor. I agreed seeing how I did not know my way around the town and I would get a unique view of Tucson from this brother-in-the-Lord's work van. But just after that invitation, this new friend said something very odd to me. He said that before we headed out to his customers for some repair jobs he had to stop by his house. I said, I thought this cottage was your house? He said: No, and that he was currently separated from his wife and living in this rented cottage for the time being. He said that she had a lot of anger issues. Well, I had recently been tuning in to a lot of broadcasts and testimonies of women who had had abortions and so I had heard that many of those women had serious anger issues as well as serious anxiety, stress and grief issues. So I asked this friend if his wife had ever had an abortion, and he said that yes she had.

God had me travel 2,000 miles to notice something across the street from a church

Well it just so happened that when I was visiting this friend's church the day before, I had noticed a Christian Crisis Pregnancy Center was located right across the street from the church. So I recommended to my friend that perhaps he and his wife should look into post-abortion counseling at that center. He thought that was a good idea.

So, during the rest of that week, when I was not tagging along with this new found friend, I visited the men in prison I had come out to see. I also handed out gospel tracts in downtown Tucson and Phoenix and then at the end of a week, I flew back home. I was greatly blessed by every aspect of that trip but the best was yet to come.

And now God revealed His special plan for my trip

About two months after returning home from Tucson, I received a letter in the mail from my Tucson friend whose rented cottage I had stayed at. And in that letter was a marvelous surprise. My friend told me that he and his wife went to the Christian Crisis Pregnancy counseling center and now they were back together. Praise the Lord! He does all things well! I had NO IDEA that my trip to Arizona had another wonderful purpose, that I had never dreamed of! And that is how our God works and how HE – and not US – weaves HIS tapestry of our lives, for our good and for HIS glory! Remember, HE is the POTTER. WE are the CLAY.

Epilogue

One of those two Christian men I had visited in Arizona and had been writing to, was released from prison several years ago and not only got accepted into a Christian half-way house for former inmates in Phoenix, but he eventually got a full time job as a maintenance man for their half-way house facilities.

The other man in that prison, whom I have been corresponding with in Arizona since 1993, is finally going to be released this month (January, 2021) after spending 30 years in prison. He knows the Lord and has been ministering to others in prison for a long time. He recently had an opportunity to learn braille via someone from the Foundation For The Blind who came into the prison to teach some of the inmates. He has already transcribed several books including some Christian books. And God has opened the door for him to transition into the Phoenix Christian half-way house where they will help him get back into society and get some public assistance if possible. His entire family died while he was in prison those 30 years. His mother died in 2020, his sister died in 2019 and he lost his brothers a while ago. His father may have died before this man entered prison. He is in his 50s now. I will be continuing to assist him from afar with gospel tracts, discipleship materials and things of a more practical nature. And he will be ministering to others including the blind (through his braille translation work) and those in the prison, that he is able to disciple from the outside.

Isn’t it remarkable how I met this man in prison so long ago, seeing how I was living 2,000 miles away, on the east coast and had known nothing about him prior to that time. God used another inmate (who I hardly knew and had never met in person) to cause our lives to intersect. It really is awesome to see how events in our lives are woven together by the mighty hand of God. Our wonderful God and Savior has a marvelous way of directing our steps and our paths, does He not? — *RM Kane*

“In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.” Proverbs 3:6

NOTE: The writing up of this story – after all these years – was inspired by a very special sister in the Lord – Lara Love – who is quite a writer, blogger and evangelist for the Lord, and whose writings and video messages have often uplifted me. So, if you want to read some really encouraging stories about how God can work in our lives, please check our Lara’s website (www.goodnews.love) and her YouTube channel (Lara Love & Good News Ministry).
