**In God’s Time, We’ll Understand**

by Alta Pratt

My message today is a series of random thoughts and examples concerning God’s timing, vs ours…

In the reading from Acts, the disciples asked Jesus when the kingdom would be restored to Israel, Christ answered “It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority.” He also said “you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you” 1 Peter also referenced “Time” in the words, “Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you in due time”

GOD’s time is NOT our time….. I’m sure that the disciples had no idea what Jesus meant when he said that they would receive power when they received the Holy Spirit. After they received the Holy Spirit on Pentecost…they understood. They could look back and know what Jesus had intended for them. They had what they needed to accomplish the tasks that Jesus had set before them, and their trust and obedience to Jesus has resulted in His story being shared throughout the world for more than 2,000 years.

Time and Time again, Jesus tried to prepare his followers by telling them that he would be crucified but would return to them on the third day….yet, they were in panic and grieved when he actually died, and in disbelief when they found the tomb to be empty. Once they actually saw him and spoke to him, they understood all the things that had been told to them in the past. Hindsight is amazing.

Proverbs 3:5 says, “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and don’t rely on your own insight.”

When we pray, sometimes we expect an immediate answer, and when we don’t see the results, we can doubt God. We are a culture of “Immediate Gratification” We forget how nice it can be to anticipate and look forward to something. A burger cooked fresh on the grille can taste so much better than the fast food offering at the drive-through window. A long simmered stew, better than a can of “Dinty Moore”.There is nothing sweeter than the anticipation of a new baby coming into the world, you can’t rush that blessing. Even though most now find out the gender of the baby months before it arrives. My daughter once pointed out that , many of the surprises in our lives are not good news. A surprise might be a worrisome diagnosis or a late night call about an accident….Waiting until the birth of a new healthy baby to know it’s gender, is one of life’s greatest surprises, regardless of it’s gender. Waiting can be a great time of anticipation.

We are patient when we plant a seed or a bulb…we know that it can take weeks, or even months to see the results of our efforts, we trust that if we nurture that plant, we will see results. We should be like that with prayers.

So when we say a prayer, and expect immediate results, or expect the answer to be yes, we tend to question God if the answer is not immediate or what asked for. God answers in Kairos time, which is God’s time..not the same as ours. SOMETIMES, GOD HAS A BETTER PLAN FOR US. Our way is not always the best and when we look back, sometimes weeks later, sometimes years later, we can often see that God had a better plan.

An example could be that of a couple who were unable to conceive the baby that they had prayed for and eventually adopted a child. As they look back, they know that the child had been born for them….and they can’t imagine their lives without it. Their prayers were answered in Kairos time, which is God’s time, not “our” time.

There are many times when even looking back, we don’t understand. But I believe that when we get to heaven, we will. We’ll see the whole picture.

I gave birth to my first baby a few weeks after I turned 17, I had already separated from my husband and there were so many people who worried that my life would be ruined if I did not give this child up for adoption, something I myself could never consider. That baby made me stronger, made me more confident, encouraged me to be successful so that I could be a good example to her. That baby was the greatest blessing in my life. At the time, my parents were supportive and loving. Many friends and relatives worried that my life would be more difficult… As time passed, they could see that they had been wrong…she didn’t make my life more difficult, she made it better, and continues to do so. I can’t imagine my life without her. By the time I was 24, I had four children, there were a lot of raised eyebrows. But because I was a young mother, I’ve been able to enjoy my Grandchildren and my Great Grandchildren. I sometimes feel that I failed to make a difference in the world…but then I look at my amazing family and I am so very proud of all of them…children, grandchildren, Great grandchildren. The world is a better place because they are in it, they are my legacy. God has blessed me.

Another example of God working in my life was when I fell while trying to decorate for my Granddaughter’s baby shower, breaking my hip and femur. I wouldn’t wish the pain on my worst enemy, but it turned out to be a life saving accident. It resulted in the diagnosis of a long time heart issue that had been misdiagnosed for years. I was told that it was a miracle that I hadn’t already had a serious stroke or heart attack that I probably would not have survived. Seven months later I was hiking in the Rocky Mountains! Praise God!

Most of us are familiar with the poem “Footprints in the Sand”

One night a man had a dream. He dreamed that he was walking along the beach with the Lord. Across the sky flashed scenes from his life. For each scene, he noticed two sets of footprints in the sand: One belonging to him, and the other to the Lord. When the last scene of his life flashed before him, he looked back at the footprints in the sand. He noticed that many times along the path of his life there was only one set of prints. He also noticed that it happened at the very lowest and saddest times in his life. This really bothered him, and he questioned the Lord about it. “Lord, you said that once I decided to follow you, you’d walk with me all the way. But I have noticed that during the most troublesome times in my life there is only one set of footprints. I don’t understand why, when I need you most you would leave me.” The Lord replied, “My precious, precious child. I love you and I would never leave you. During your times of trial and suffering, when you see only one set of foot prints in the sand, it was then that I carried you.”

We’ve seen amazing results from our prayers…many are answered the way we had hoped, but others took longer, still others we may have disappointed us. But remember, God sees the whole picture, and he is always with us. Someday, we will see the whole picture. Whether it’s years down the road, or when we see Jesus in heaven…we’ll have a better understanding of God’s plan, be patient. IN GOD’S TIME WE’LL UNDERSTAND.