

Please welcome...

Returning to preach for us today is **Chuck Harris**, from Calimesa. Be sure to welcome him back and thank him.

### Keeping Perspective on Life

*"Every man's life ends the same way. It is only the details of how he lived and how he died that distinguish one man from another."* - Ernest Hemingway -

*"A pessimist sees the difficult in every opportunity; an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty."* - Winston Churchill -

*"A wise man can see more from the bottom of a well than a fool can from a mountain top."* - Unknown -

### October Birthdays

1 Brandon Taylor      25 Christina Bruni  
3 Betty Heitmeyer    28 Allan Brown

(Note: if anyone is "missed" here, let Jim know)

#### Regular Meeting Times

Sunday.....9:45 a.m.  
Sunday.....10:45 a.m.  
Sunday.....6:00 p.m.  
Wednesday.....7:00 p.m.

**Preacher:**  
(Vacant)

**Church of Christ**  
81-377 Ave 46  
Indio, CA 92201  
(760) 342-1859

(Address Service Requested)

# Indio Informer

Vol. 25 No. 41

October 12, 2014

## When Life Doesn't Make Any Sense: Part 3

By Allen Webster

Things become clearer with time. In 1911 W. B. Stevens wrote a hymn that has survived a century because its message resonates with so many people:

*Farther along we'll know all about it  
Farther along we'll understand why  
Cheer up my brother, live in the sunshine  
We'll understand it, all by and by.*

Paul noted that at times "*we see through a glass, darkly*" (1 Corinthians 13:12), but things often become clearer later. Helen Keller said, "Keep your face to the sunshine and you cannot see the shadow." The Spirit urges us to look "unto Jesus" (Heb. 12:1-2).

Military strategists, firefighters, and football coaches have learned the value of an aerial view. From ground level it can be difficult to decide where to place troops, cut fire lanes, or which play has been called by the opposing team. But from a helicopter or press box, one can quickly get the lay of the land and make more sense of what action is required. What was a mystery close-up makes sense from above.

So it is with suffering. It is not possible for us to get an "aerial view" of our lives, but if we patiently wait for some time to pass, we may be able to look back on that time with a better perspective. In the moment—at ground level—it can be hard to gain an overall perspective. We cannot see the forest for the trees, the puzzle for the pieces.

God lives outside of a time continuum, so He sees the end from the beginning (Isaiah 46:10; Acts 15:18). We, however, live in sequence. As Albert Einstein observed, the “reason for time is so that everything doesn’t happen at once.” Like driving an automobile on a dark night, we can only see events as they happen. Since the duration of our life on earth is short at most (James 4:14), we must be patient and trust that God’s hand will soon guide us to a good end.

God has a greater plan that has not yet reached its end (Exodus 5:22–23; 6:1). Even Stephen Hawking said, “The whole history of science has been the gradual realization that events do not happen in an arbitrary manner, but that they reflect a certain underlying order, which may or may not be divinely inspired.” If a thoroughly secular card-carrying evolutionist can see that there is order in the world, surely believers can trust that God has a plan.

Jesus explained, “*In your patience possess ye your souls*” (Luke 21:19). A part of patience is the ability to wait for more information without throwing away all we hold valuable. During the Great Depression a good man lost his job, exhausted his savings, and had to forfeit his home. His grief became nearly unbearable with the sudden death of his wife. The only thing he had left was his faith, and it was weakening. One day as he looked for work, he stopped to watch men doing stonework on a church building. One was skillfully chiseling a triangular piece of rock. Not seeing a spot for it, he asked, “Where are you going to put that?”

The man pointed toward the top of the building and said. “See that little opening up there near the spire? That’s where it goes. I’m shaping it down here so it will fit up there.” Tears filled the good man’s eyes as he walked away. “Shaping it down here so it will fit up there” was what God was doing for him.

If you take the pieces of a large ship and drop them in the ocean one by one, most of them will sink, but put them together and they will float. Pieces of life—youth, old age, death, loss of a job, a bad medical report—might cause our faith to sink, but put them together and God can make them “float.” Paul wrote, “*We know*

*that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose*” (Romans 8:28). Prayer works, so we must not lose faith in it when it doesn’t. God hears our prayers (John 15:7; cf. James 5:16–18; 1 Peter 3:12; 1 John 5:14), but this does not mean that we always get an immediate resolution to our problems.

All of us have at times felt what Lincoln felt when he confessed, “I have been driven many times upon my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had no where else to go. My own wisdom and that of all about me seemed insufficient for that day.” The songwriter felt: “I must tell Jesus all of my trials; I cannot bear these burdens alone.”

But what if prayer seems to make no difference? Popular author Nicholas Sparks said, “I don’t pray because it doesn’t work. Prayer doesn’t fix anything. Bad things happen anyway.” The psalmist knew what this was like. He wrote “*My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art Thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? O my God, I cry in the daytime, but Thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent*” (Psalm 22:1–2). Jesus depended upon prayer in the midst of His agonies, and He quoted this text, but God choose not to let the cup pass from Him (cf. Luke 22:44).

Part of the solution to this riddle lies in John’s teaching: “*This is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask any thing according to His will, He heareth us*” (1 John 5:14). We only want—and God will only do—what is “*according to His will.*” We may ask for something that is not in our long-term best interest or the best interest of His kingdom or other members of it. We might pray that a dating relationship will turn into a marriage, but not know that if we marry that person we will eventually forsake God. We may ask for a job interview to result in a high-paying job in another city, not knowing that it would not be good for our children to grow up in that city. What faithful Christian would ever die if we could keep praying to be healthy and to live?

God does sometimes intervene providentially (behind the scenes, through means) in answer to prayer, but when He chooses not to, we must not lose faith in Him or the power of prayer. God answers prayer with “Yes,” or “No,” or “Wait.”