

THE LEANING SIDE

Jentezen Franklin

A small church would occasionally call on one gentleman to pray, and every time this one particular guy would pray, “Oh, God, thank you for this word today, and bless these people today.” Then he would end with the strangest statement: “And, oh God, oh Lord, prop us up on our leaning side.” Every time, he’d pray, “Oh Lord, prop us up on our leaning side.”

Finally, the preacher pulled him aside, and said, “I love the way you pray, but I don’t understand your little closing phrase. What are you talking about – ‘Prop us up on our leaning side?’” He responded, “Well, preacher, I’m a farmer. I live out on the farm and, you know, I live in the country. I’ve got an old barn, and it’s been there a long time. It’s been through a lot of storms, and a lot of bugs have eaten at it.”

He said, “I got to looking at it one day when I was riding on my tractor, and I noticed that it was leaning to one side, so I thought to myself, ‘The barn is leaning, and it’s a matter of time before the whole thing falls.’”

He continued, “So, you know what I did? I went and got some pine beams, and I propped it up on its leaning side.” He said, “It still leans, and probably always will, but I propped it up on its leaning side. And it’s not going to fall down because I propped it up on its leaning side. And I got to thinking about it.

When I was on the tractor and I was riding in the field, I thought about the kind of year I’ve had, and some of the storms I’ve been through, and some of the people that are bugging me, and eating away at my joy and eating away at my spirit. And I just got to thinking, you know – I’m still here! I’m still standing after all that stuff I’ve been through. The storms, and the howling winds – they couldn’t topple me. I’m still standing by the grace of God.”

He concluded, “From time to time, I find myself leaning – leaning toward my old desires, leaning toward anger, leaning toward becoming bitter or hateful at the people who are bugging me, or leaning toward going back to the old habits and the old life I used to have. And when I feel myself start leaning toward that tendency, I just remember that old barn, and I pray out loud on my tractor, ‘Lord, I thank you that you’re going to prop me up on my leaning side.’”

RECOVERING FROM FOSTER CARE

Neil Tremblett, adapted

What I am about to say is very hard to say and, for some of you, harder to hear. I was told many times growing up, “You are damaged goods.” I didn’t understand it at the time, but I do now. I remember every time I heard this said to me, and I remember every person who said it. I was in 23 different homes in my life. Many group homes, many foster homes, all claiming to be good and there for “care.” I can tell you, most were anything but care for me or others. I had unimaginable things done to me and saw unimaginable things done to other children in the name of “care.” I will not tell you of these things, but will tell you, I carry scars, many scars. I also carry wounds that are still open and healing. The sexual, physical, and mental abuse I suffered at the hands of those who claimed to care, well, is forgettable for those who turn to God. Healing from all those hurts and pains have been hard and has taken much time. It has also taken God opening doors in my life to people who truly care about me and my well-being.

There was a time in my life when I thought taking my life would end all the pain, hurt and anger. I cried out many times in my young life, “God, where are you? Do you see me? Do you see the things people are doing to me? Do you see the things adults are doing to me? Do you see the workers who turn their heads and close their eyes to the evils done to children like me? God, do you care?”

Like Job, who suffered much at the hands of evil, God was watching, and I can tell you He does care.

God will make all the wrongs right in His time. Every one of us has a choice to break the cycle, to change our future. We don’t have to let the past dictate our future, if we choose not to.

Just because you can’t see the sun through the clouds, does this mean the sun is not shining? No! The sun is still shining! Just because the Son is not seen through evil and ungodliness, does this mean that the Son can’t be seen? No! He can be seen and He does care about you and what you are going through. In His time, He will make things right!

I have a beautiful wife who loves me with all her heart! Five beautiful children who love me with all their hearts! Like Job, the latter is better than the beginning.

Find someone to **do** good to this day! Don’t wait for tomorrow!

**"WHAT MUST I DO
TO BE SAVED?"**

ACTS 16:30

LEARN THE GOSPEL

John 6:45; Romans 10:17

BELIEVE IN CHRIST

Hebrews 11:6; John 3:16

CONFESS CHRIST

Matthew 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10

REPENT OF SIN

Acts 3:19; 17:30

BE BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST

Mark 16:16; Romans 6:3-6

REMAIN STEADFAST

1st Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10

**"THE ASSEMBLING OF
OURSELVES TOGETHER"**

HEBREWS 10:24-25

SUNDAY

Worship @ 10:00 a.m.

Studies @ 11:45 a.m.

WEDNESDAY

Studies & Worship @ 7:00 p.m.

THURSDAY

Men's/Women's Studies

@ 6:30 p.m.

75 Sherrod Boulevard

Belen, New Mexico

**"IF A MAN IS OVERTAKEN IN
ANY TRESPASS...
RESTORE SUCH A ONE"**

GALATIANS 6:1

CONFESS TRESPASSES

James 5:16; 1st John 1:9

REPENT OF SIN

Acts 8:22

PRAY FOR FORGIVENESS

Acts 8:22

REMAIN STEADFAST

1st Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10

**"A WORD FITLY SPOKEN IS
LIKE APPLES OF GOLD IN
SETTINGS OF SILVER"**

PROVERBS 25:11

"A lie has speed, but truth has endurance."

"WHOLE COUNSEL"

ACTS 20:27

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I'M NOT THE JUDGE?

Dominic Venuso

We are not the final judges of anyone's salvation, for there is One Lawgiver and Judge (Romans 14:1-15:7). We have nothing to do with judging those outside the faith (1st Corinthians 5.12).

But we **do** judge those inside the church. The local church must make a judgment about who we do and do not allow into the membership of the local church. The keys of the kingdom given to Peter (Matthew 16:19) are in the hands of the local church as she carries out church discipline (Matthew 18:18).

We cannot side-step important questions of who does and does not qualify for membership by pointing to our not having the final say over someone's salvation. Local churches must humbly and prayerfully welcome all who appear to truly believe in Jesus and must discipline those of her number who through their disobedience demonstrate a lack of faith in Christ. We must not shirk the responsibility of discernment that comes in disciplining and in welcoming members.

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