

## “God Has A Plan”

I have a file called “Ideas for Devotionals”. When I am stumped about what story to tell or what to write about, I go to that file. I went to it this week and it was blank; I had used up all my ideas for devotionals. I thought about what I could write, and not only was the page blank, but so was my mind. For some reason the old TV program “The Naked City” came to mind. If you remember, at the end of the program, they would say “There are eight million stories in the Naked City, this has been one of them”. I would reply, “then why do we have to watch re-runs”! There are eight million stories in our lives and there are no reruns, but we do have forgiveness and do overs. I was talking with a long-time friend and discovered that our lives had been similar. We both came from dysfunctional families with someone in the family who had been a strong presence in our lives. For me, it was my brother, and for her it had been a sister. For both of us, those people had taught us to stand up for ourselves and that we could be more than what others thought of us. My brother pushed me all the time about the importance of education -to not give up as he had done, and to use it to better my life. Her sister told her she was better than the life that had been given to her and to rise above those that belittled and shamed her. We both found our way out of the lives that had put us down and found our way to our faith. It was a journey that culminated in a church and newfound faith. I believe that the journey started a long, long time ago, even before our birth. God loved us before we knew him, before we were formed, and he had a plan for our lives. We may not like that plan, we may suffer in that plan, and we may not follow that plan... But then we get a second, and even a third chance. Our strength is in knowing we are loved, and held as precious, by a loving, forgiving and ever-present God. It is in that plan we can give hope, love, and witness to others.

Jeremiah 1:5 Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you, before you were born, I set you apart.

Isaiah 55:6-8 Seek the Lord while he may be found; call on him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will freely pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord.

Lord, we thank you for your presence in our lives. May we live lives that are worthy of your love. Be with those who mourn, those who face illness, those who are suffering, those who hunger, and those who are lost. Be with our church that all who enter our doors find the living Lord. Be with our Pastor and our staff as they lead us. Help us Lord to be the hands and feet of Christ for it is in his name we pray. Amen

Grace Epperson