

STUMBLING STONES

Romans 9:30-33 What then shall we say? That the gentiles who did not pursue righteousness have attained it, a righteousness that is by faith, but Israel who pursued a law of righteousness has not attained it. Why not? Because they pursued it not by faith but as if it were by works. They stumbled over the “stumbling stone. As it is written: See, I lay in Zion a stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame.”

I recall a Pastor telling me “He just would not leave me alone.” Every time he tried to go a different way; a stumbling stone was in his path. He followed the path he felt God was leading him to and his way became clear to him. I have often asked Pastors about their path to the ministry, and it has never been a completely easy path but a path that strengthened their resolve and a path they became more committed and called to. John Wesley was at a prayer meeting when he “felt his heart strangely warmed.” This was not the end of his journey but the beginning as he knew without doubt that he was saved, not by works, but by God’s grace and love. Prior to that he was a soul still searching.

I have had many “stumbling stones” but God has used them to take me to him. Many times, there were events and problems that would have drawn me away from God, but he has used them to draw me closer. Poverty was hard to overcome but jobs that gave me money to save led me to a job that was fulfilling and worthwhile. I loved being a Nurse.

Lord, thank you for the path you set me on and the teachers, mentors and pastors who held me to the path.

Lord, we thank you for this day and may we be worthy of the gift of each day we are given. Be with us. We ask that you be with those that are grieving and those who are ill. Be with those who seek you in our midst, may they find you waiting. May we be the hands and feet of Jesus in this place and in this time. Be with our Pastor and bless his ministry to us. Be with his family, grant them peace and health. May we be the hands and feet of Jesus the Christ here, in this time and in this place. Be with our country Lord, we are a land in turmoil and confusion, give us peace and clarity. Be with our staff and leaders, grant them health and safety. May those who enter our doors as strangers find a haven and you in our midst. Help us Lord where we have “stumbling stones” in our path. Amen

Grace Epperson