

Puzzles

For my birthday I received a jigsaw puzzle from my son and daughter-in-law. The puzzle is a panoramic view of Comerica Park. It is beautiful and I am anxious to get it done. Adam Hamilton in his recent book “The Call,” a story about Paul, compared our lives to jigsaw puzzles. He said that we don’t see the whole picture and how it will all fit together but God uses those pieces to make us who we become, and He knows the final picture. As I thought about this, I realized that if the things in my life had not happened my life would have taken quite a different turn. I began to see how God had used my sorrows and my joys, my gifts and my weaknesses to make me who I am. Would I have ever come to Christ without those pivotal moments? I don’t know. I know there were times when I was headed down wrong paths and somehow, I had the strength to turn from that path and the necessary strength to go in another direction. I think both were a gift from God.

What are the puzzle pieces in your life that have made you who you have become? Was it a smooth easy road that you never wandered from? Or was it a rough path that was difficult to follow? What are your joys and your regrets? God knows your needs and your desires. He walks beside us through it all.

Paul was on the road to Damascus. He had witnessed and approved the stoning of Stephen. He had continued his work of persecuting the followers of Christ.

Acts 9:3-10, 15-19 As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?” “Who are you, Lord?” Saul asked. “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting” he replied. “Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.” The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone. Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes, he could see nothing. So, they led him by the hand into Damascus. For three days he was blind and did not eat or drink anything. In Damascus there was a man named Ananias. The Lord said to Ananias “Go! This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel. I will show him how much he must suffer for my name.” Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul he said “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit. Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul’s eyes and he could see again. He got up and was baptized and after taking some food, he regained his strength.

This had to have been one of the greatest turnarounds ever. Paul had been the enemy and was now the evangelist. He spread God’s message and the saving grace of Jesus Christ throughout the world. The one who had persecuted was now the champion.

Lord, may we accept Your leading. May we trust that You are with us on our journey. Give us strength, patience and Your will in our lives. Fit all the pieces of our own puzzles into the finished picture that glorifies and exalts you always. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Grace Epperson