

Life is going smoothly along. You are faithfully involved in worship and in the spiritual practices of the faith. And you run into a brick wall. What gives?

At the end of 2 Chronicles 31 we learn that Hezekiah faithfully served the Lord and that he prospered. Then in chapter 32 we read, "After all that Hezekiah had so faithfully done, Sennacherib king of Assyria came and invaded Judah." (2 Chronicles 32:1) Hezekiah is faithful and hits a brick wall.

Josiah, Hezekiah's great grandson, was equally devout and led his people in a fabulous celebration of the Passover. We read of him, "After all this, when Josiah had set the temple in order, Necho king of Egypt went up to fight at Carchemish on the Euphrates, and Josiah marched out to meet him in battle." (2 Chronicles 35:20) Josiah is faithful and hits a brick wall too!

In both cases we read the phrase, "after all that" or "after all this" referring to the faithfulness of Hezekiah and Josiah.

What gives? It's actually very simple. We live in a fallen world and tough things happen. The wonderful news is that our good Lord is with us in our prosperity and in our pain. No matter what is happening in your life you can know the immediate presence of our Lord who never forsakes you.

"God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble." (Psalm 46:1) What gives (or Who gives)? *God* gives us his presence, help and hope!

"Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. When you pass through the waters I will be with you." (Isaiah 43:1b-2a)

With joy – E. Stanley Ott, October 20, 2009 Vol. 8, No. 39, *GOD GIVES*

Prayer Suggestions

- Give thanks and praise to God Our Father for all His gifts to us this day, especially "His presence, help and hope."
- Pray for our country. Pray thankfully for our precious freedoms, like our right to choose our leaders. Ask for wisdom and discernment as we explore the current choices before us.
- Pray that all those running for office will examine their motives and follow their core beliefs, that they truly have good intentions for the betterment of our nation.
- Lift up those who daily stand in harm's way – law enforcement, first responders, ambulance people, firefighters – all those who serve to protect our citizens in ways we may never know.
- Pray for peace and calm to prevail in the turbulent streets of the ghettos, the cities and anywhere the potential for violence exists.
- Pray that the police and the dissenting ethnic groups may find new paths toward compromise and new resolve to uphold the law in ways that benefit everyone.
- Pray for insight and remembrance of past upheavals, and hope that they serve as lessons not to be repeated.
- Pray for the First Presbyterian Church of Sebastian, for Pastor Jeff, for our church leaders, that we may grow and flourish and serve as a beacon for Christ's work on earth.
- Ask for a giving – and a forgiving -- heart.