

Last week, we started a mini series of sermons that essentially talk about evangelism which is a word that frightens most people because it challenges us to share our faith in God. In order for us to even consider sharing our faith, we first have to have an understanding of who we believe in. Last week, I said in the most basic definition, that God is love that was demonstrated in the life, death and resurrection of Christ Jesus.

Today, I want to talk about how has God made a difference in your life and I want to share a couple of stories. The first one happened about 17 years ago. One of my best friends from high school was living in Georgia and was driving to work on a rainy morning when his small pickup hydroplaned. He crossed the median and hit a semi head on and die instantly.

Last Tuesday, Alisha and Caidon Cooper were on I70 during the snow storm and they hit some ice. Just like Andy, they crossed the median and ended up in the ditch. The only difference is that they did not hit any other vehicles and outside of body damage to their vehicle, all is good.

We all know that the Coopers believe in God and are very active here. They were baptized last January on the Baptism of our Lord Sunday. I don't want you to answer this next question out loud, but answer it right away in your head. Did God protect them because of their belief and faithfulness?

Now let's go back to Andy. Andy was fresh out of the Navy after serving as a nuclear engineer on a sub. He was engaged to a young lady who had two young girls of about 4 and 5 whose own dad had run out on them and had absolutely nothing to do with them. Andy treated them as his own. He was their daddy. But I stand before you right now and can say that I have no idea where he is. I do not know if Andy believed in God. So if Andy did not believe in God, did God allow him to die? If he did believe in God and you answered that nothing happened to Alisha and Caidon because of their belief, then why did Andy die?

I don't think anyone would say that Andy died because he might not have believed in God. At the same time, I think every one of us would agree that God was with Alisha and Caidon as they slid out of control.

Personally, I believe God is active in all things with all people and there are miracles that do happen and I cannot explain why some are recipients of miracles and others are not. But then again, maybe miracles are happening and we just don't realize it.

Going back to Andy, to my knowledge, he never went to church and I could not even tell you if his parents ever went to church. Sometime after his funeral, my mom called and told me that they had some visitors at church. Andy's mom, dad and sister showed up for worship. After time, they joined my home congregation where his dad and sister ended up serving on council and I believe both are serving today. Through Andy's death, they either came to know God or renewed their relationship with God. It was God who comforted them in their grief and gave them time to heal.

In both of these stories, we have examples of how God was with Alisha, Caidon, Andy and his family. The circumstances were all different along with the outcomes. But through it all, God was present.

As I said last week, we are on a journey and while we are on this journey, God never promised us that we would not hurt or suffer. They are a part of life and no amount of praying or faith is going to protect us from them. But we pray and believe that God will be with us through it all.

This is how our life is changed because of our belief in God. We know that we will never be by ourselves as we face this world because God is always with us.