

I've Been Thinking...

A few weeks ago I was approached by Pastor Yuan about writing a column for the ABC newsletter. I was a little apprehensive because of the admonition in James 3:1 "Let not many of you become teachers... we shall incur a stricter judgment." With that in mind, I feel it necessary to say that this column is not ment to instruct, my only aim is to share a few thoughts and perhaps inspire some of your own. But when I say, "I've Been Thinking", give me some room because there may be a struggle!

Many of my favorite Bible verses begin with the phrase "and it came to pass". Let me explain. Did you ever have one of those weeks where nothing seemed to go according to plan? I recently went through one of those periods. I was becoming extremely frustrated both at work and at home. I have been a mechanic for forty-five years but I couldn't seem to fix anything. No matter what I tried, (not even new parts, double checking my work, consulting with other mechanics) nothing wanted to cooperate.

Things at home weren't much better. My marriage was even beginning to suffer, as I began to take out my frustration on my wife and family.

Then the thought came. It says, "and it came to pass", NOT, "and it came to stay". Even in the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm it says "though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death". Notice it does NOT say TO the valley or IN the valley. But THROUGH. That suggests that I'm coming out the other side!

Why does God allow His children to struggle with frustration, fear and failure? I have found at least three reasons, perhaps you can think of more:

1. IT KEEPS ME HUMBLE      It's very easy for me to get prideful when things go smoothly for extended periods of time. I begin to believe more on myself and less on Him.
2. IT MAKES ME GRATEFUL      When difficult circumstances come; I am reminded of God's goodness to me in the past and of His faithfulness in the future.
3. IT BEARS WITNESS TO OTHERS      How God's people handle adversity is important because someone is watching. My response to adversity could lead someone TO or AWAY from Christ.

Things are better now, I've gained a new perspective and renewed spirit, all because God's word said "and it came to pass"....

God's love to all,

Chuck Patton