

“God’s Poem”

In Ephesians 2:10 Paul writes, “For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.” The word translated “workmanship” is *poiēma*, a term used of the finished work of an artist or poet (thus a “poem”). In the New Testament it is used only of the wise, magnificent works of God—either that of creation (Rom. 1:20) or of recreation, i.e. Christians (Eph. 2:10).

In a similar way that a poet carefully weaves together words to form something beautiful, so God is weaving together various aspects of our lives to form a work of art that not only includes our performing God-glorifying works, but also becoming like Christ (Rom. 8:28-30).

Imagine what it would be like to look over the shoulder of a gifted author who is crafting a story whose every ingredient has a poetic ring to it. No doubt, there would be times when we would ask, “Why in the world did you choose that word?” “I don’t understand why this character is introduced!” “Where are you going with this?”

Of course, as the story unfolds we likely will exclaim, “Oh, I see why you put things together that way now! It makes perfect sense!”

This is the way it is with the ultimate poet. Do you think of your life in this way, that you are God’s poetic story? How many times have you thought, “God, I wouldn’t have brought that character into the plot, or at least I would not have had them act in this way!” Or, how many times have we concluded, “Why did you go in that direction with the storyline?”

Let’s consider an example. Suppose that for years you have prayed for a child to come to Christ and it seems like there has been little change. You think to yourself, “Boy, this is not how I would have crafted this plot!” Yet, suppose the ultimate author not only wants to bring your child to Christ, he wants to teach you what it is to be patient and, what is more, he knows that you struggle with depending upon him. So, if this were answered quickly, you would back off of your conviction that prayer is absolutely essential.

What is more, maybe he is going to work out the answer to this prayer in such a way with the delay that far more is accomplished than what you ever dreamed possible.

On one hand, we have to be careful concluding we will trust God in hard times because we think we can figure out what he is doing. Bottom-line, we trust God because we know he is holy, loving, good, and wise, even when we don’t understand what he is doing and why.

Yet, to engage in these kinds of conversations is simply a good reminder to us that when our life storyline doesn’t go the direction we thought it would, we will still anticipate the glorious ending and say with the prophet, Habakkuk, “Yet I will rejoice in the LORD; I will take joy in the God of my salvation.” (Hab. 3:18)