

At the beginning of my junior year of high school, my mom was diagnosed with cancer. This sent my faith into a tailspin as I began to seriously doubt how much God loved me in the midst of this tragedy our family was facing. I quickly learned that faith is not an instinct but a choice; I had to choose to trust that even in our suffering, God was good and present.

When I opened my eyes and heart to his presence, I started to see the evidence of his goodness. I saw his goodness in the meals that others cooked for us, in the words of encouragement I received constantly, and in the answered prayer for my mom's healing. Yes, God was working for my eternal good during that season, but he also poured his blessings into my life in the middle of it all. Even though my wavering faith made it more difficult to see, God never broke his promise: "In all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose" (Rom 8:28).

For such a valuable blessing, God requires very little from us to receive it. All he asks is that we love him. This love allows God to come in and pour his goodness into our lives. One aspect of this is a heavenly inheritance. 2 Corinthians 4:17-18 says, "For this light and momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal." God's version of good doesn't always mean a specific outcome, a clear "why?", or a certain blessing. This is where faith is vital; sometimes God's purpose is beyond our understanding, but it is infinitely better than we can fathom.

Christ's death and resurrection is the reason we can receive this everlasting good in Heaven. Through the sacrifice of his son, God paved the way to that "eternal weight of glory" since we could never make it there on our own. Even while on a cross, Jesus shows us how to endure hardship while maintaining an unwavering trust in God's goodness. This is difficult to do since our troubles do not always feel "light and momentary" in the midst of suffering. While my mom was undergoing cancer treatment after treatment, the difficulty we faced seemed unending. My life seemed to be consumed by this affliction and I feared that the hurting I felt was permanent.

But the good news for us is this: God views suffering as temporary and slight in comparison to the good he is bringing. This is a beautiful truth because it illustrates that God is carrying out such a wonderful plan for our lives, which is so much bigger than the difficulties we face, that he can't help but view them as light and momentary. This means that even though his work in our lives may not *feel* good, he is still working and since it is his work, it *is* good. This is so challenging to trust in when you're in the middle of something difficult, but crucial to facing it. By the Spirit, we are empowered to fully trust in this way, since we are unable to do so entirely by our own efforts.

I think it's safe to say that most of us are in a tough season of life right now. The world's brokenness is on full display and its messiness has touched everyone in some way. In this season, it's so easy to feel discouraged and defeated by the hardships we're facing. However, we can all find hope in God's promise that none of our troubles will be wasted in bringing them together for good. Take heart in the fact that we serve a God who is so sovereign that nothing can stop him from keeping his promise. There is abundant hope to be found in this truth. As you walk through this school year, trust in this promise when life gets tough and give thanks when his blessings are evident!