

“How could this happen to me?” Luke chapter 1 verse 43

Six months separated the miraculous conception of John the Baptist from that of his cousin Jesus. After receiving the message from the angel Gabriel that she would have a child by the agency of the Holy Spirit, Mary goes to visit Elizabeth, her cousin, John's mother. When Elizabeth saw Mary approaching, the child in her womb “leaped for joy”, and she was filled with the Holy Spirit, and exclaimed, loudly, “Blessed are you among women, and your child will be blessed. How could this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?”

This question, “How could this happen to me?” is more often associated with tragedies and disasters. We ask it when we find out, for example that we, or a loved one, has a serious illness, or when financial ruin strikes. Interestingly, we don't ask it so often when bad things happen to other people; only when they happen to us. The answer, of course, is another question; “Why would this not happen to me?” Whatever precautions we take to ensure our safety and security, there is nothing we can do to guarantee that nothing bad will ever happen to us or those we love, and we can't blame everything on the government, or our parents.

It is at such times that our faith proves its worth, as we put our trust in a God who is able to strengthen, enlighten and deliver us even to the point of death and beyond.

But we also ask the question when good things happen. When we win the lottery, or get an email from Nigeria saying that we have been left a fortune and can access it if we send.... (sorry, scratch that one). But we certainly might say it if we meet our perfect partner, or get signed for a premiership football club (or something. I'm probably addressing a minority there). And we need God then, too, to guide us in the way we steward the good things that have come to us.

For some, though, the greatest unexpected blessing comes when we receive favour from God. You may have known people who are Christians, and wonder just what it is that they see and you don't, and then, without warning, God begins to reveal himself to you. Or we may know Christians who seem to know God with an intimacy we don't, and then God draws us into that intimacy. “Why me?” we ask. “What have I done to deserve it?”

The answer is that when God touches a person's life it is not because of their deserving. It is because he loves us and desires to be in loving relationship with us, and because he has a purpose for our lives. “Why me especially, and not someone else?” It's unlikely that we will ever know that in this world. There are times that we have to accept that God has called us to him because that is his will for our lives, and enjoy the ride.

Prayer.

Father, thank you that you have called me to be aware of you and your interest in my life. Thank you that you love me and have a plan and purpose for my life. Please guide me in my response to you, so that I may truly submit my life to your will. In Jesus' name, amen.

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