

“...THAT THEIR HEARTS MAY BE ENCOURAGED,
HAVING BEEN KNIT TOGETHER IN LOVE...”

Colossians 2:2



From my Heart

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While backing my car out of my garage into the alleyway, I noticed a large turtle struggling to climb from the wet alley onto some grass.

Because he was moving in a direction away from the nearby creek, I naturally assumed he must be lost. In 7 years here in Frisco I have never seen a turtle in the alley. I felt compassion for the turtle who was obviously very lost. How would he find his way back? Or would he be out here on dry ground trying to figure out where he was for the rest of his life? Without my help he might never find his way back to water. I couldn't bear the thought he might not live because he couldn't find his way home.

I started to drive to my destination but because of the turtle, I just couldn't. So I pulled back into my driveway. Although I was squeamish to pick him up with my bare hands, I found a large black plastic garbage bag to use and made my way to the turtle.

As I approached him, not surprisingly, his head retreated into his shell. I gently placed the folded garbage bag over his back and sides so I could pick him up without touching him. I held him out in front of me as I walked slowly, deliberately down the alley toward the water. I wondered what this "flying turtle" must be thinking about being carried through the air for the first time. I figured he was probably scared to death not knowing what was going to happen to him.

When I finally made it to the small creek, the rocky sides were too steep to go down while holding the turtle with no way to brace myself. So, I continued to walk farther through mud and slush until the ground sloped in such a way that I could more easily reach the creek which led to a nearby pond. I gently placed my turtle at the water's edge. You can imagine my delight when after a quiet minute I saw him scurry into the water and disappear. Home at last. Safe. Delivered from a possible death. As I retraced my steps down the alley in my muddy shoes, I was thankful he was taken care of and my mission was accomplished. I had a sense of gratefulness and relief.

As I have reflected on this incident I have mused that:

- the turtle never asked me to do anything for him
- he was helpless
- he didn't pay me anything
- he didn't do tricks or coerce me into doing this

- he didn't work for me to earn my help
- he didn't know how far he was from where he needed to be
- he could not have gotten back to the water by himself

My little turtle saga brought to mind the words in Ephesians 2:8,9:

“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that **not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works lest any man should boast.**”

Grace is God's gift to us in Christ; it is not something we have earned by working for it, nor is it something we deserve. I am comforted to know He loves me just like I am, in spite of my waywardness, failures and imperfections. These words are a balm to my soul and I hope they are to yours.

In His love for you,



P.S. After 45 years of ministering to college students, loving them and caring about them, it was a tragic blow to learn of the **Virginia Tech** tragedy just as this issue of From My Heart was going to press. Here are some fitting words from our U.S. National Campus Director, Mark Gauthier:

As I'm sure you all know, the tragic events and great losses that occurred at Virginia Tech yesterday have left us grieving and clinging to the Lord in this difficult time. Though our understanding is limited, it is in these desperate times that we are reminded that we have a great High Priest who has gone before us, who loves us, and prepares a place for us. And because He stands at the right hand of the Father even now, we pray. We have been praying specifically for those who have experienced this unimaginable loss first-hand, but also for our staff and students at Virginia Tech who are coping with the raw emotions and pain in their midst. Because of your concern, I want to share with you some of the information that is now available about the situation and some specific ways you can be praying.

As you can imagine, the confusion and chaos has made obtaining detailed and accurate information difficult at best. The staff team at Virginia Tech is involved in a number of on-campus activities to help students and families process the loss. We are unable to confirm the loss of 4 of the students involved with Campus Crusade but it does appear that they were among the casualties.

As we have sought the Lord as to how He wants us to be salt and light in this moment, there are several things that have been done. EveryStudent.com and all myeverystudent.com home pages have been updated to now show "Where is God in the Midst of Tragedy?" The links are <http://www.everystudent.com> and <http://www.gobbletalk.com>.

Please be praying for this situation. Pray for strength and God's abiding peace for staff and students as they seek to minister to those affected by this tragedy. Pray for healing to take place. Pray that God would be glorified and that many would come to Him as the Refuge and Rock.