



September 02, 2020

***FAITH ANSWERED  
(SO I DIDN'T HAVE TO...)***

Dearest Hills Church Family,

I am reminded of a “God moment,” that I would like to share with you today. “God moments” (also fondly known as “God winks”) in my house are those moments that seem almost unbelievable, are perfectly timed and decidedly serendipitous. My family has taken up the habit of writing them down in a notebook – so we will not forget how God has shown up when we least expected it. This new ritual, of writing down our God moments, has become sacred and has helped to keep us on our toes as we continue to pay attention to these particularly “special God moments” in our lives.

One evening after dinner, I watched my youngest daughter’s brows furrow and her face redden as she broke open a fortuneless fortune cookie and watched its pieces crumble onto the table. She grumbled as she collapsed in defeat next to the crumbled mess, “Great. No school. No volleyball season. No friends. No justice. No vaccine. No hope. And now NO FORTUNE! What’s next?” My heart sank as I watched her disappointment grow. (You know things have gotten bad when all of your hopes rest in the inspirational wisdom found inside a small fortune cookie.) I quietly listened as my children then engaged in a conversation centered in worry, concern, and the unknown. I could not really do much more than listen. It seemed my own concerns had thwarted my ability as a parent and a pastor to name hope, to seek to console, and/or find the silver lining.

Worry is my own arch nemesis. Worry finds me when I least expect it. Worry can ruin a perfectly good afternoon picnic, or a peaceful slumber. Worry can take over my thoughts and can consume my every move. Worry can ruin my appetite, can steal my joy, and can claim creative power over my imagination. Worry sabotages. Worry is another log on the fire of every “worst case scenario,” and it is a powerful supporter of fear. Worry, as I have learned over the years, is most powerful when it is kept bottled up inside, or dismissed by another. Worry can leave you tongue tied and hopeless.

Worry, however, is a part of life. Worry happens because life can be scary. If life is pretty scary right now for most adults -- I imagine life must be fairly terrifying for our kids. With this in mind, I thought about sharing the message of Jesus from his Sermon on the Mount that urges us not to worry. “*Do not worry about life, what you will eat or what you drink or about your body, what you will wear... Do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will have enough worries of its own.*” But I just couldn’t seem to muster the confidence needed to sound believable. I was worried.

I started to feel desperate as I struggled to come up with something both truthful and hopeful when a small voice from the far end of the table spoke. “*I found a fortune in my cookie. I think it is meant for us all. I will read it now. This fortune says, ‘Fear knocked at the door. Faith answered. No one was there.’*” My youngest son’s words hung in the air over all of us. He then said, “I think the fortune is telling us to

remember to have faith and not be afraid.” We all simply stared at him until my daughter whispered gently, “Amen”.

Amen indeed.

So brothers and sisters, hear this good news! Do not worry, for God is with us. Do not be afraid, for we are never alone. We belong to a God who shows up – who meets us where we are. We belong to a God who speaks when we are unable, who encourages, who protects, who guides, and who loves us above all else.

Pay attention. Have faith and do not be afraid.

(And maybe pick up some fortune cookies!)

Amen.



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Associate Minister