

From frustration to dancing

Families in our street are coming home from May vacations this week. It's great that after two weeks of vacation we come back together as church family.

I was thinking this week about some of the **habits** families have.. When our kids were small we read stories a lot at bedtime. That's a great habit, and I rather expect my kids will do this too, for their kids, eventually. Other habits may be less desirable. My parents used to do some things that drove me crazy. Example: At home, if my mom wanted our attention she wouldn't go find us, she would just start calling out questions and we would have to run to her to hear what she wanted. My sister and I would say to each other, "I will never do THAT in my house"! Can you relate? Do any of you have these things that you react so strongly to?

here's another example from my home, that has to do with weekends.

Most Americans regard their weekends as very important. I think it may have to do with them having much less vacation time than Europeans do. Both of my parents worked. Very often on weekends we would head out early on Saturday morning to go up to the mountains. Or, we would travel to my Aunt's house. We would certainly make the most of the weekend and usually drove home on Sunday afternoon. But WOE is me, if something happened to put a hitch on leaving the house. Or if anything happened that might alter the weekend plans. Then my parents would say something dramatic like, "Well, that's the whole weekend ruined".

My sister and I would roll our eyes. I mean, the weekend hadn't even started yet, and they were **giving up** on it. As a kid, I could not understand their frustration. I vowed I would not ever have this negative attitude. Beware of vows... could I keep it? Nope. I've got another story to tell on this later...

We all face Frustrations. Christians are certainly not exempt from frustration! Even though we know God loves us, it's easy for us to get out of balance and to get frustrated.

A famous Dutch philosopher once said, 'Elk nadeel heb z'n voordeel.' Less poetically, In English, every frustration offers opportunities.

My question today is this: **Might it be true** that *frustrations give us an opportunity?* If so, *What kind of opportunity?*

Today I would like to think about how God offers us the opportunity of experiencing his provision. My first point is...

1. **God's supply is abundant** Jesus said he came to bring abundant life

I have come to bring life, more abundantly.

My second point follows from this:

2. **We experience the abundance of God, as we participate together**

Let me explain what I mean. Our life in Christ, in this world, is lived TOGETHER. Hans mentioned participation in his sermon last week: we are called to participate with God and with each other. We are called the body of Christ. The word body implies much more than being together, or even standing next to each other.

Imagine a body where the parts just existed next to each other—it's a dead body. When we're talking about LIFE, the word body suggests functioning together.

One of Jesus' disciples, Peter, wrote about functioning together:

1 Peter 4:8-11

Above all, keep your love for one another fervent, because love covers over a multitude of sins. Show hospitality to one another without complaining. Just as each one received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of the varied grace of God. Whoever speaks, let it be with God's words.

Whoever serves, do so with the strength God supplies,

So that in everything God will be glorified in Christ Jesus

verse 11 shows us that God will provide strength for us to serve one another. We are meant to serve—but very importantly we are meant to serve IN HIS STRENGTH. Peter must have seen this over and over with Jesus. Jesus continually turned to the Father to receive strength.

What I also taste here is that God seems eager to provide us abundantly with his strength.

Why do I think he is eager?

Peter uses the Greek word **corregio** for 'supplier'. What does this word mean in the context of the time? A *corregio* is a generous benefactor of a choir or dance group. In those days, such a group could not exist or perform—unless they found a private benefactor; this person would be enthusiastic about the group and would commit himself to give them not only money, but also his involvement, his leadership and guidance.

The dancers would depend happily on the *corregio*. Why is that? Because they knew he was committed to them, involved with them and understands them.

You might say that the Bible teaches us that God is our dance-leader. He is the one who makes it possible for us to dance, to grow, to accomplish our mission. The word also appears two times in Paul's letters.

For example, In Philippians 1:19, Paul writes about *corregio* to his friends at Philippi,

I know this (situation) for me will turn out to deliverance through your prayer and the provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ

Paul seems to say that God provides, also through our prayers. They are connected.

3. What happened to my vow// My story

Lans and I recently drove to France for a painting course. Remember how I told you that my sister and I vowed that we would never be like my mom, saying, “the whole weekend is ruined!”? well, I blew the vow. Sky high. I almost gave up on the whole trip before we started.

Let me explain: It was a long trip to Provence, so we decided to take it in two days. We left after dinner the first day, arriving late at night at a hotel somewhere along the route. All day long I had been rather upset by something. What was happening? Actually my eyebrow was infected. How was that possible? A hair follicle or something. But it was swelling. I saw it in the mirror, which (of course) I kept checking. And it kept swelling. How weird! Soon I would be a monster, and scare especially small children. And I would be meeting all these people who didn't know that normally I just look... normal. I kept checking the mirror, yep, getting more swollen. Praying, of course. Take this away Lord! When we awoke the next morning, the eye was still swelling. My world had become totally focused on my swollen eye. So Lans finally asked me, why was I being so difficult? Well! Can't you see? No, he couldn't. or wouldn't. Finally, he asked me another question: WHY was this bothering me so much?

What a good question.

I said, “I guess I'm afraid of what people will think of me at the painting course. I wanted to be part of things, enjoy being with people, make a good impression. Be able to look into people's eyes without hiding... but NOW...

“The whole weekend's ruined!”

I heard myself say it! it was actually going to be a week..not a weekend... But was the week ruined **already**? I had imagined that I would be totally rejected. Thankfully, as I explained my scenario to Lans, the holy spirit began to show me another way. It started with identity. “Wait, (he seemed to say), **Remember** that *you are a beloved and valuable daughter.* “ (Ah, yes Lord).

I felt him say, ‘I have a new scenario for you: Jeanne, stay close to me today and this week and lean on me. We are going to focus on others at this painting course... and it won't have anything to do with how you look.”

Whoa.

I did not feel God gave me any promise of immediate healing for my eye, but I could accept the scenario he gave me... And I felt peace and hope as I began to pray for the people I would meet... We kept driving.

When we arrived late in the afternoon my eye was a lot better. I was certainly glad about that. But, I didn't let it distract me. I was expectant: God had said we would do some cool things

together. Stay close, I had felt the Lord say. As I began meeting people, I kept talking with God about what he wanted to do. And during this week God gave me so many opportunities to love people.

There were two teachers and 12 female students (some with husbands accompanying). We were together all day-- painting and eating.

For me, It was a week of trusting God in a new way. We were so busy that I trusted him **even to remind me** to pray. I decided not worry about it. And he did remind me, it was so chill. I'd be walking somewhere, and I'd find myself saying, 'here I am, I'm yours. What now, Lord?'

It was important to me to lean on God, not just to *run around* doing things. (for those of you who don't know me, this is an important point, as I am what you call a 'do-er'). Mostly I felt that God gave me small things to do, and I'd just say, 'great'. . I decided to start with the thing God gave me to do, and then just trust him to show me how to go on.

That meant that **I surrendered the outcomes to God**. I didn't try to overthink it all. I wanted God to take the initiative here.

Recall the verses we read earlier in Peter, which I discovered later: God says he will supply the leading, the energy. And of course I was there to paint too!

As the week went on, I felt that I trusted God more; I felt free to distribute the gifts he gave me for others.

Here are a few of the things I could do for people

- So I got to carry someone's stuff.
- I got to just sit next to someone.
- I got to listen to someone's sad story and not give any advice at all. While listening I felt that God was comforting her.
- Other moments, I got to express gratitude. And I became so grateful. –
- On the last evening we listened to a woman playing music on an accordion. It was relaxed and the evening was sunny still. I felt like dancing, and grabbed hands with two of the ladies standing there. We began to dance, then Lans joined in and soon everyone was dancing. One lady dancing next to me smiled at me and said something like, 'we were just waiting for you to start things!'

From frustration to dancing: the title of my sermon.

All glory goes to our God who supplies us abundantly so we can dance together.

What about the “almost ruined weekend”? My desires at first had been rather understated, I realize now. I had wanted just a ‘good week of painting’. I had wanted to improve my technique, but also wanted to be accepted and to feel good in the group. When the thing with my eye happened, I had felt that the whole plan was threatened. My desires would never be met! I was frustrated.

But God is good and my husband is a patient and wise man. God took me under his wing. He reminded me that I am his beloved and valuable child. From there, under his wing, he gave me the **deeper desire of my heart**, and in such abundance. He led me **out** of the place of self-absorption. He led me **into** a place of connection. Instead of worrying about what others thought of me, I experienced being more connected with the Father. And this overflowed to connect all of us together.

And I have a feeling that this week, for me, has given me more expectation toward God— He’s the one who supplies everything we need in order to dance. I hope that through this message he is increasing your expectations.

4. Takeaways/housegroup

Perhaps today, through the texts we have read or through this story, you feel that God is impressing on you some new attitudes -- or that he is giving you some practical step you can take.

Below is a list of a few ways that you might respond to this word. Perhaps one of these suggestions applies to you, great! In any case, let’s continually pray for others, that God will release his supply to them.

Is it a new idea for you that God desires to supply our needs? Can you thank him?

What do you think of the idea of surrendering the outcomes to God? Have you experienced this? What would this look like/does this look like?

Is it a new idea for you that God desires to supply us abundantly together? Is God giving you some ideas about leaning on him to give you the strength you need?

Is it a new idea for you that some frustrations can be seen as opportunities? Are you willing to ask God to show you how you can see things through his eyes?

You might be experiencing frustration right now in your life, and it might be a new idea that God knows you, knows your process and is able to help you. Can you accept this?