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October Glory

“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.” Romans 8:28



My wife took this picture of a maple tree in our backyard this fall. Several years ago I went to a local nursery and told one of the men that I wanted one of those maple trees that look fluorescent orange in the fall when the leaves turn their magnificent colors. I didn't even know the name of the tree but I learned that it is called October Glory.

This fall we looked out the patio door and watched the tree finally coming into its glory. It has been a hard road for this tree, as my wife reminded me. Not many years after we planted our October Glory we had a tremendous wind storm that took out the main trunk of the tree about half way up. The same storm that ravaged our tree also so severely damaged my next door neighbor's maple tree that he had to replace it. Our tree looked a little sick but we decided to nurse it along.

Then along came the ice storm not too many years later. Once again our October Glory took a beating. I learned later that one of my neighbors up the street took a pole and beat the limbs on his trees to break up the ice and relieve the limbs of some of the weight. I wish I had been so wise. Our tree suffered more damage and we seriously considered cutting it down. I'm glad we didn't though.

The tree still bears the marks of some of the trauma it has suffered. We keep pruning it in the winter to reshape it and we are making slow progress. This fall when the leaves turned a shimmering orange, we were so happy that we have nurtured and nursed this tree through all of its ravaging seasons.

This tree is really a metaphor for life. Many of us suffer terrible losses in life. Sometimes they are the result of bad decisions that we make, and many times they have nothing to do with our choices, we are simply victims of circumstances beyond our control. I'm reminded of Paul's assurance that no matter what our circumstances are when we entrust them to God that he will bring good things out of them. This doesn't mean everything that happens to us is good; in fact, some things may be terribly bad. Nonetheless, God can use them as stepping stones for good things when we turn to him. And the lilies of the field may suffer losses, but they outshine Solomon!

“So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.” Matthew 6:28-29