TIME OF REFLECTION

"Human beings are not self-referential. You don't make yourself feel loved by telling yourself 'I love you.' We are relational beings, and so we need something outside of ourselves to tell us we have value and worth."

~Dr. John Ashley Null, scholar at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin and North African bishop

"The church in eternity will appear more lovely, but it will not be more loved."

~Megan Hill in *A Place to Belong: Learning to Love the Local Church*

"It is better to be the accused than the accuser. So much better! Christ Himself took the place of the accused, that hellish place where fingers are pointed, that heartbreaking place of rejection and exclusion. He went there, and He saved us from there. And now, if He leads us to that same place, we are not alone. He comes to us there, with a deeper purpose of redemption which will, sooner or later, win the day."

~ Ray Ortlund, theologian, author and retired pastor

"Therefore, that joining together of head and members, the indwelling of head and members, that indwelling of Christ in our hearts—in short, that mystical union—are accorded by us the highest degree of importance, so that Christ, having been made ours, makes us sharers with him of the gifts with which he has been endowed. We do not contemplate him outside ourselves from afar…because he deigns to make us one with him."

~John Calvin (1509-1564), French theologian, pastor and reformer (*Institutes* 3.11.10)

"Despite all of this, my heart rejoices in the Lord and my heart is at peace knowing that He is always faithful and His promise of Romans 8:28 always remains true. '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.' The purpose of trials in life is not to drive us away from God, but to only bring us closer. May God's Will be done, not mine."

~Treyveon Henderson, running back for the New England Patriots
after being sidelined with serious health issues

"It seems to me quite disastrous that the idea should have got about that Christianity is an other-worldly, unreal, idealistic kind of religion that suggests that if we are good, we shall be happy. On the contrary, it is fiercely and even harshly realistic, insisting that there are certain eternal achievements that make even happiness look like trash."

~Dorothy L. Sayers (1893-1957), English novelist and playwright

SERMON – "The All-Powerful Love of God in Christ" – *Pastor Don Willeman*

SERMON PASSAGE – *Romans 8:28-39 (NASB)*

[28] And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. [29] For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters; [30] and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.

[31] What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? [32] He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things? [33] Who will bring charges against God's elect? God is the one who justifies; [34] who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, but rather, was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. [35] Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or trouble, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? [36] Just as it is written:

"For Your sake we are killed all day long;
We were regarded as sheep to be slaughtered."

[37] But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. [38] For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, [39] nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.