

Dear Lillian Methodist Church family,

Isaiah 48, tells us God refines His people, and purifies His people, in the "furnace of affliction." I Peter 1, tells us that we, by necessity, are "grieved by various trials," to prove the genuineness of our faith. We are tested "by fire." James 1 has the audacity to teach believers to "count it all joy," when we meet trials of various kinds.

We know that temptation does not come from God. However, God does allow various trials in our lives. Affliction and trials are necessary because we, by nature, tend to seek out the easy and painless paths in our lives. If God were to permit that, our spiritual life would be stunted and stagnate. God is the "vinedresser" (John 15) and He prunes us, for our benefit, to bear fruit.

Physical affliction is a trial Elaine and I know all too well. Yet, I can see without reservation, that with each trial, comes the God-given strength to bear it. I may never understand the "why" of this particular trial, but I can affirm the words of Job:

"I had heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eyes see You."

God is not an idea, hypothesis, or theory. He is a Person. His mercies are new every day. Thank you all for your continued prayers.

See you Sunday!
Perry Cunningham
Lay Leader