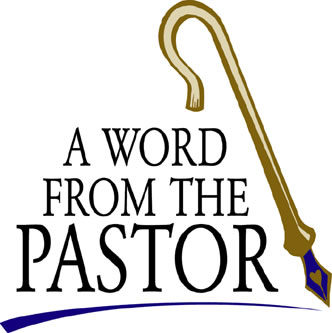
*“It is God who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers; it is God who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them like a tent to live.”*

Isaiah 40:22



Even as we live and breathe beneath the promise of another autumn colored canopy, there will be some who suffer from anxiety and depression anticipating that which will follow - a cold and barren landscape. Although there is beauty to every season, it is not always easy to see through the dreary cloudy days. You might think, having grown up in Minnesota, I would be conditioned to the frigid temps of winter. And even though I worked the farm alongside 6 brothers and sisters every day, (sometimes in below zero temps) it doesn’t mean I enjoyed it. But I knew, come rain or shine, the cows, calves, horses, pigs and chickens needed food, water and shelter. Maybe I adjusted or maybe I didn’t know any better, because let’s face it, children deal with the elements better than many adults.

Just as our lives are affected by environment, similarly we often cannot acclimate or accept the overwhelming disparity of pain. We prefer sunny dispositions, living life on a breeze rather than facing the ample supply of brokenness that seems to hover incessantly. On top of our woes and our worries, we are also asked to endure the rest of the world’s pain. Everywhere we look we are reminded of the tragic and unspeakable things people do to one another. It is unfortunate that we do not get to see the positive sides in life nearly as often. I am convinced there is just as much, if not more, good in this world. However, rather than face reality, find the proverbial silver lining and then spread such GOOD NEWS, we tend to downplay the effects of heartache with euphemisms such as; “When life throws you a curve ball hit it over the fence”; “When life hands you lemons make lemonade”; and “This too shall pass.” All these sayings were intended to make us feel better, support us in our weakness and uncertainty, but instead have become more like clichés. Whether we face small doubts, temporary trouble or tragedy scripture keeps us grounded. We are reminded there is *nothing* God hasn’t seen or heard or felt, which begs the question why we think we should be exempt. We learn to stand when we fall to our knees. When we ask for forgiveness and strength, Jesus shows us how to accept each day with love, peace and grace. We are indeed like grasshoppers as Isaiah put it; we are no match for the holiness and awesomeness of our mighty and powerful God. The mere size of God is incomprehensible and so it follows there would be many things we do not understand. The mystery of God *can* be of comfort when we submit to God. Martin Luther said, “We are to fear, love and trust God above all things.” A little fear and trepidation keeps us open to the hand of God as He shapes our hearts and minds. As a divine vessel, then, we are able to hold whatever is dropped in to our lives. We are crafted to withstand the elements of life. Take a spin on the Divine Potter’s wheel; let His holy hands guide you through every moment. Take a deep breath and remember that

*“We have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us. We are afflicted…but not crushed; perplexed but not driven to despair; persecuted but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed.”* 2 Corinthians 4.7-12

***Pastor Cheri***