

## NOT LUCK AT ALL

We are blessed to have a considerable amount of bush at the back of our property that contains many mature trees. Around 3:00 a.m. on Sunday July 2<sup>nd</sup>, I heard a loud crash that woke me from my sleep. It is surprising the sound woke me because I can sleep through the loudest of storms, and even my loudest snores. When I heard the sound, I thought it might have been thunder.

When I took Daisy out for her morning business around 7:00 a.m., it was then when I discovered what made the loud sound earlier. I found that a large portion of a tree from my neighbour's property had fallen onto my side of the bush taking several other trees, branches and limbs with it. The debris was not only on my lawn and in my bush but continued into my other neighbour's lawn also. The fallen tree had just missed landing on my shed and came a few inches short from hitting my neighbour's, too.

While there was a considerable quantity of branches and limbs all over our two backyards there was nothing I could do about it at that time because I had to get ready for church. It was not until late that Sunday morning that my neighbour spotted the fallen tree out back. He sent us a text thinking at first the tree damaged our shed, but then messaged back shortly after that he was wrong and there was no damage to it. It was not until 3:00 p.m. when I could finally go out back to survey the damage up close, and begin to start cleaning up all the foliage.

All I had was a hand saw to begin cutting away at all the branches. My neighbour saw me from his window and came out with a better tool for cutting branches into smaller pieces. He also told me to place all of the cut-up branches into his trailer and once it was full, he would take it to the dump to dispose of. He even offered to come over one night with his chain saw during the week to cut away the bigger pieces of wood. I was grateful for all the help he was offering.

We stood there for a moment assessing all the damage when he said to me, "You were lucky that the tree did not damage your shed like I first thought." He knows I am a minister, so I decided to reply by saying, "It was not luck,

but rather my boss upstairs taking care of me." This was my belief at the time and still continues to be a week later after cutting and trimming a large amount of foliage.

We often hear people comment about having good luck on their side. We associate good luck with positive things happening to us or others. It is easy to see why my neighbour considered it to be good luck that the fallen tree did not damage either of our sheds despite coming so close to each of them. The damage and costs would have been considerable if this had happened.

One of the reasons why I did not consider this avoidance of further damage just luck is because my thoughts are shaped by Scripture. The Bible does not speak about receiving "good luck", but it does speak a lot about benefiting in positive ways from God's care and blessings upon us. This is how I perceived the fallen tree in my backyard a week ago. For the massive tree branch to have done all the damage it did yet barely avoid missing the two sheds would have required a lot of coincidences to happen.

Faith tells me God was fully aware of the massive rot inside that portion of the tree that was going to cause it to eventually break away. God knew the safest timing for that branch to come down would be in the wee hours of the morning when my family and my two neighbours were safe inside our homes, and not out back doing yard work. He was also aware that even though I have a strong work ethic, I would need help from my neighbour who had the proper tools to tackle this massive cleanup. If God had not blessed me with such a helpful neighbour, I probably would have had to hire a tree cutting company to come in and dispose of all the debris. That would have cost this cheap, frugal pastor a lot more money. Some people might still consider this good luck being on my side, but faith helped me to see it as God's blessing in taking care of me during this time of need.

This experience and my different perspective of it got me thinking about the familiar hymn **God Will Take Care of You**. The opening verse to this hymn is:

**Be not dismayed whate'er betide, God will take care of you;  
Beneath His wings of love abide, God will take care.  
God will take care of you, Through every day, o'er all the way;  
He will take care of you, God will take care of you.**

Some days we will be dismayed by fallen trees, other days by fallen health, and still others by fallen loved ones, or other challenges. Some people may look at our falls as bad luck, or good luck if they were not as bad as they could have been. As believers I hope we may see these moments from the perspective of God taking care of us. By so doing we will be reminded how God is very active in our lives and shows His care for us in subtle ways just like He did for me during this past week. Being aware of God's presence caring for us in the midst of these fallen moments will give us the strength we need to cope, persevere, and overcome.

There was another sign of God taking good care of me through the ordeal of the fallen tree. When my Montreal Canadian neighbour got out his chain saw, I was wearing my Toronto Maple Leaf hat. I came away unscathed. Luck had nothing to do with that either.

***Keep safe and God Bless***

***Pastor Dean***