

Meditation: SAUERKRAUT

A meditation on Romans 8:28

And we know that in ALL THINGS God works for the GOOD of those who love him, who are the called according to his purpose (Romans 8:28, emphasis mine).

I have been meditating on this verse for over 50 years, yet when I was writing the essay “God Will Take Care of You” in 2008 a new thought came to mind that I will now pass on to you.

Have you ever made homemade bread? After the ingredients are assembled, they must be kneaded together until they form a well-blended dough, which is then allowed to rise. The next step is to knead the dough again, and perhaps a third time, until finally it is ready to be formed into a loaf and baked. Then it is ready to be eaten, the purpose for which the process was begun.

Sometimes “kneading” the dough is aptly called “working” the dough, for it does require effort as well as skill to prepare the dough properly. In Romans 8:28 I can picture God as the Master Baker, working (that is, kneading) together all the ingredients that come into our lives, adding some of his own for balance, getting his children ready to fit into his good purpose for them. Part of that purpose is that we might be nourishing bread for others, reflecting our Lord, who becomes the Bread of Life to all who will come to him and eat.

Once I bought a loaf of pumpernickel sauerkraut bread, anxious to see how it would taste. Being raised in the Pennsylvania Dutch culture, sauerkraut was a staple in our home, and I liked it, but I could not imagine tangy, salty, stringy sauerkraut as an ingredient in bread! As I savored my first bite, I realized how wrong I was to doubt the wisdom of the baker. The sauerkraut flavor was very subtle, not overpowering as I had suspected. No sauerkraut was visible; the fine grain showed how well the ingredients had been blended. In addition, I found the bread to be delightfully moist, a good quality I attributed to the sauerkraut.

Now back to the analogy of God as the Master Baker. I can see our lives being assembled in individual bowls. Besides the usual ingredients, each bowl contains some “sauerkraut.” Mine includes some labeled primary lateral sclerosis, along with allergies; yours have different labels. Every time more sauerkraut is added to our bowls, God adds more of his own special ingredients, such as GRACE, MERCY, and LOVE – lots and lots of LOVE! As he kneads the dough until the consistency is just right, we may find that we no longer consider our “sauerkraut” to be “bad,” since it produces such good results!

And so, if you are one who loves God, don’t worry. No matter WHAT comes into your life, whether sweet or sour, you can count on this: God WILL take care of you. Amen.

An excerpt from the essay, “God Will Take Care of You.”