

PRAYER CALL 1/2/22 – Pencil Sharpener

Last week as I was praying for one of my adult children Holy Spirit gave me a picture of an old-fashioned pencil sharpener; the kind from grade school that could be found stationed on the wall with a hand crank.

The kind of pencil sharpener that I saw in my mind is called a cylindrical or planetary sharpener, in reference to their use of planetary gears. It consists of two gears mounted so that the center of one gear revolves around the center of the other. This type of sharpener can be mounted on a desk or wall and powered by a hand crank.

The pencil goes into the center of the sharpener and depending on the pressure placed on the pencil toward the sharpener and the speed of the cranking, is how fast and sharp the pencil becomes.

That speaks to me that even when circumstances put us in the grinder, if we stay in the center of God's will we are in good hands. He now the perfect amount of pressure and speed to hone us. We can trust Jesus in all circumstances; we must cooperate with His working in our lives.

Sometimes we feel like we may not have specific direction and are just hanging out in life – like a pencil in a pencil sharpener. If you put a pencil in and turn the handle the pencil will just kind of turn and bounce around, nothing happens to the pencil.

However, when pressure is placed on the pencil toward the sharpener, then progress is made toward pulling out a sharpened point. I don't know about you, but I get a great sense of satisfaction when I pull a pencil out of the sharpener to see a perfectly sharp point.

Sometimes we need a little pressure put on, us or we need to press in to engage in what God is doing, to be honed and sharpened to the point that He wants for us. I can imagine that God is delighted and satisfied with His handiwork as we cooperate with the pressing; to become what He wants. The POINT is maturity in Christ is to be transformed into the image of Jesus Christ.

Philippians 3:12 is the scripture that came to mind. "Not that I have already been made perfect, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do; forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. All of us who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too, God will make clear to you."

In this passage "to press on" means – to make, to run, to flee, put to flight, drive away; to run swiftly in order to catch a person or thing; figuratively of one who in a race runs swiftly to reach the goal.

“To take hold” means – as to make one’s own; to take into oneself; appropriate; to seize upon/take possession of; in a good sense, of Christ by His holy power and influence, laying hold of the human mind and will, in order to prompt and govern it. To understand and perceive.

“Forgetting what’s behind” means – no longer caring for; given over to oblivion.

“Straining toward what is ahead” – to stretch out to or towards; to stretch forward upon. (this bring to mind a mental picture of sitting on a swing. We must strain toward movement, kicking our feet in the direction in which we want to go. No straining toward, no movement.)

As we press into challenges, or have challenges thrust upon us (aka difficulties) – we have an opportunity to allow Holy Spirit to hone us into being mature in Christ – to be transformed into the image of Christ. Or we can choose to just hang out in circumstances, not making any progress, allowing life to spin us around but not attaining any goal or purpose. We must choose wisely and partner with Holy Spirit, taking every opportunity to be honed. How satisfying to be transformed into the image of Christ.

Declarations:

We are transformed into the image of Jesus Christ.

We cooperate with Holy Spirit in all circumstances to be brought to maturity in Christ.

Jesus Christ is trustworthy and faithful in all circumstances, using all opportunities to mature us in Him.

Lord Jesus, thank you for your plans and purposes for our lives, not for calamity, but for hope and a future.

Jesus, be glorified in all circumstances in our lives.

We press in and take hold of the perfecting process. We repent and move on from past mistakes and lean into the divine future that the Lord has for us.

Where we lack vision, Holy Spirit open the eyes of our hearts to see Your plans and purposes.

We have the mind of Christ, we think the thoughts of Christ, we are transformed

into His image by the renewing of our mind.

We are honed and sharpened to the point of serving the Lord in every way according to His will. The pressing times are not to destroy us but to sharpen and prepare us for this day in time and for the days ahead. All glory to Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.