

NEWS AND VIEWS
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*“Southern Baptists with the Full
Gospel for the Whole World”*

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It's like a circus out here! This modern expression really came to life in my life the other day. Early in the morning, I was caught quite by surprise to see the roadway closed across the railroad tracks at the State Fairgrounds. It really *was* a circus. The circus was being unpacked and people were unloading the train and moving equipment and animals and anything else that was necessary to have a circus across the highway. They had stopped traffic for that. I think there were clowns who were disguised as men in the mix of the movers. They didn't look that much like clowns...but I know a clown when I see one! It truly was a circus on the move...but it was the only thing moving. If this was indeed the work of clowns...but it wasn't funny at all. The problem was that it caused a major case of traffic gridlock while people were trying to get to work. But a circus doesn't care about your agenda. It's got one of its own. The show must go on.

As I was trying to find an alternate route around the roadblock, I began to think about the recent winter storm deposit that was showered upon us in the middle of the day. In this case people were trying to escape the storm's effects on the highway and it didn't seem to matter which way they went...they couldn't penetrate the gridlock. The desire for people to get home quickly began to turn into frustration as 40 minute commutes in more normal times turned into 4 hour trips.

Comparing these two events brings me to these thoughts. Most of what goes on in our lives happens out of our control. The only thing we truly can control is our reaction to the events. So how did we do? Did we all pass the test of being tested? My reaction to these two testing times revolves around our goings and comings. It's all about how we travel or all about how we don't. So what do you do when you find that life's road is totally gridlocked? Where does one go? And how do we get there? And what frame of mind are we in when we finally get where we are going?

Americans certainly love their cars. My generation grew up with the muscle cars...more power...more strength. Cars give us a sense of being independent and that we can go anywhere we really want to go. We can move about at will. I remember the old commercial that said, *See the USA... in your Chevrolet...* I don't know that the commercial sold a lot of Chevrolets...but it must have appealed to the culture's desire to go and go and go. But that was before the days of gridlock. Whether it's the circus or the snowstorm, it's gridlock all the same.

According to one source gridlock is defined as *a traffic jam in which congestion at one or two intersections affects a wide area so that traffic is unable to move in any direction or a situation in which no progress can be made.* The latter definition can define what is happening at the highest level of government. I define gridlock as paralysis. Whether we're caught in a snowstorm, firestorm, traffic jam, or traumatized, when we are in a place where we are out of place, it is gridlock. The place of no progress. The place where we are powerless. This place is not a pleasant place. So how do we move out of it and where do we proceed that allows us to come out of it? We go to God. Since God is sovereign, He knows gridlock. And He knows how to use it. In fact He often sends it. He desires to get our attention.

Then the Egyptians took up the pursuit, and all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots and his horsemen went in after them into the midst of the sea. At the morning watch, the Lord looked down on the army of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and cloud and brought the army of the Egyptians into confusion. He caused their chariot wheels to swerve, and He made them drive with difficulty; so the Egyptians said, "Let us flee from Israel, for the Lord is fighting for them against the Egyptians." (Exodus 14:23-25)

When coming out of Egypt, or being delivered from sin, there's only one way out. Following God brings freedom. If you are an enemy of God, your destruction is assured. God displays His glory when He demonstrates His power to save or destroy. It should get our attention. Thank you, God. Jesus saves. And He has broken my gridlock...How about yours? Don't stay stuck...Jesus can set you free indeed.

Blessings to you,
Pastor Sam