

Fresh Start

By Jerry Bader

Blessings Great & Small

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Note: This is the first in a series of Fresh Start pieces inspired by a recent trip to Europe.

"...always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." Ephesians 5:20

My wife Ramona and I recently spent ten days in Switzerland, Austria and Bavaria (Germany). Shortly after we arrived at Austin Straubel Airport in Green Bay to fly out, God made it clear He would be joining us for the trip. Ramona and I, and the 19 travelers we were hosting, learned that our flight to Minneapolis was delayed, but were told we should still be able to make our connection from there to New York. Suddenly, that changed. We were told there was a maintenance issue with the aircraft and that someone was coming to the airport to assess the situation.

My first thought was: "How do I facilitate rebooking flights for 21 people?" My second thought was to ask God that, if it was His will, to make sure those traveling with us made their connection. A minute or two later the voice over the loud-speakers relayed the great news that there was indeed no issue with the plane and we would be boarding soon. No one would be assessing the situation; we were leaving. Some in our group may have chalked up our good fortune to luck. Not me; I know better. So, I quickly thanked God for the outcome.

"All things come from God, through God, and return to God. Praise him forever! Yes, it is so!" Romans 11:36.

I had been watching the weather forecast for Switzerland and Austria for three weeks before our trip. The forecast for the first four days called for sunny skies and warm temps with an 80% chance of rain each day for the back half of the ten-day trip. So, I prayed for better weather for the final days of the trip. Days

before we left, the forecast changed for the better and, in fact, we had absolutely gorgeous weather for almost the entire trip. That includes visiting Mt. Pilatus on a rare day when the peak wasn't cloud-shrouded. The one day it did rain we were traveling and not directly impacted by it. Ramona lost an earring and I prayed she would find it. After a fruitless search of the ground in the area, I found it dangling from an earbud cord.

"So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you."
Matthew 7:7

Many who read this might argue that these things happened by pure chance, are coincidence or just luck. I have a new response to that argument, recently acquired on Twitter: "Why is it called prayer when I talk to God, and it is called schizophrenia when I say He answers me?"

As believers we accept that all things come from God. As believers we also accept that He answers our prayers. It's really not a difficult equation to master. And sometimes He throws in things you don't think to ask for, like the view from 7,000 feet in the photo above. Just remember to say thank you. Every time.