

June Laity Minute

Mom and I have been hiking together for decades. Even after all these years and hiking the same trails over and over, we always seem to be in awe of the beauty of the woods and the glorious sounds of nature like the rain falling on the leaves during a summer shower. There is simply nothing like it.

A few days ago, Mom and I were hiking one of our usual trails. It was an afternoon where we had experienced flooding rains. The trails were messy and they had been washed out in several places. Standing water was everywhere. Our boots were caked with mud and our hiking sticks were helping us wade through some difficult places on the trail where the deluge had been slightly destructive.

We were about halfway through the hike, when I happened to look down to see something in the middle of the trail. By some miracle, it had caught my eye. This was unusual considering this thing was about the same color as the trail. I crouched down to examine it. It took me a few seconds to realize what it was. It was a minuscule baby turtle, probably 3-4 inches in length and was flipped on its back. It was just lying there motionless. Very still. I have never seen such a small turtle in my life.

I waited. Nothing happened.

We assumed the poor thing had been washed away from its nest by the raging waters which occurred only that morning and had not lived through the experience. Maybe it had been scared. It was just a little too sad to think about. So, we did what any good nature lover does. We decided he needed to be back in his rightful place, the woods. That's where he would want to be, we determined. I took a small leaf and I carefully scooped this tiny, sweet creature on to it. During this process, I placed him right side up.

And as I stared at his little, tiny face, on his way back to his eternal woods, his little leg flinched. Or was that my mind playing tricks and wanting to believe it? I stood very still. Another leg moved. Then another. I placed him on the side of the trail, faced him toward the woods and after a few moments, probably after becoming oriented to a certain degree, he took a few steps on his own.

Psalm 20 tells us to trust in God. It tells us that even though some people may rely on power or ourselves, this isn't the best plan. It says God will protect us and to freely call on God when God is needed. God will be with us during our distress.

That tiny turtle was in distress. My guess is he had totally given up on seeing tomorrow. He was literally on his back with no way to recover. Something beyond his control had gotten him there. His situation was pretty much hopeless.

Maybe we, or someone we know, have been like that little turtle. Maybe we have been hopeless, on our back with no way out. We give up even when we have the desire to overcome. We simply cannot do it on our own. It is literally impossible. But, if we call on God in our moments of distress, we can be confident that God will answer. Somehow. Someway.

Maybe I was meant to be on the trail that day, at that time to help this little turtle. Maybe it was a total coincidence. We could ask the little turtle what he thinks, but he is in the woods enjoying his life, being a turtle doing turtle things. All I know is I'm convinced God hears even the tiniest voices.

Peace,

Kelly