



**April 28, 2025**

Hello Saints my name is Bill Blacquiere. I and my wife, Mary, have been part of St. Andrews since late 2018. We value St. Andrews for its commitment to the word of God and its actions in social justice. Today we live in uncertain times or maybe this is just a continuation of uncertain times. We have concerns for the economy, the democracy of our country and the ongoing wars in the Middle East and Ukraine. At times I can have doubts about my beliefs and faith in God. I worry about the future of our country and the futures for our children and grandchildren. Often when I experience these thoughts my memory and assurance for the future goes to a hymn that was sung in churches I attended. The title of that hymn is "I Know Not Why God's Wondrous Grace" It was written by Daniel W. Whittle in 1883. The creation of the hymn is based on II Timothy 1:12. It has four stanzas followed by a refrain which is sung after every verse. II Timothy 1:12 finds Paul, the author in prison suffering for his beliefs and the sharing of the gospel of Jesus. Paul is writing to Timothy telling him that he, Paul is keeping strong in his imprisonment because he is suffering like Christ suffered. A good teaching for me to keep in mind.

The hymn brings me comfort by reminding me of God's love, His grace and promises. I will not share all four verses of the hymn but focus on the first verse and refrain. I encourage you to look up the hymn as all four stanzas testify to God's love and grace to us. The first stanza states,

*"I know not why God's wondrous grace to me he has made known.  
Nor why, unworthy, Christ in love redeemed me for his own".*

What an assurance that it is God's love that redeems us. The refrain following the first stanza is taken almost verbatim from II Timothy 1:12. Paul writes,

*"I know whom I have believed and am convinced that He is able to  
guard what I have entrusted to him for that day."*

God will guard our faith in him no matter what we encounter. Prior to this profession by Paul, he states God did not give us a spirit of fear but a spirit of power, love and self-discipline. Another promise that brings me assurance.

I know others like myself can be traumatized by these volatile happenings today. We care for refugees and immigrants who are being deported without cause and legal defense. Government employees are losing their jobs and government departments and programs are being dismantled. This has resulted in people losing medical care and the loss of food for food pantries. For decades the United States has rescued minor children and adolescents who are unaccompanied minors due to the loss of parents and relatives. They live in refugee camps sometimes for years before being eligible to move to a country. Today this program is being slowed down with the plan to end it. This immigration program is called Unaccompanied Minors. Mary and I have witnessed and experienced the saving of thousands of children's lives by the United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, commonly referred to as PEPFAR. This program was started by President George W Bush in 2003. Prior to this help from the United States children born with AIDS would die shortly after birth or within a few years after birth. Their parents would die as well. If the child didn't die right away they were placed in orphanages until they died. While some people in the USA. Have criticized President Bush for the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, people in the continent of Africa view him as a hero who saved millions of lives.

I have and will continue to advocate for children and people who do not have a voice. This can be done by contacting our representatives and senators, demonstrating in public areas and by voting. **Most important we need to pray for our government leaders.** Paul tells us to put aside our doubts and fears because God has given us a spirit of power and love. Grace and peace to you.

~Written by Bill Blacquiere

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