



Best Ever?

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Eternally Speaking Now

*But as it is written: “**Eye** has not **seen**, nor **ear heard**, nor have entered into the **heart** of man the things which God has prepared for **those who love Him**.” 2 Corinthians 2:9*

Let me introduce you to Elise.

Elise is the 5-year old daughter of a dear friend. She's one of those children who is always **happy**. Every time I meet her, she's smiling, and when I **see** her smile I can't help but smile myself. Her **pleasant** demeanor is **delightfully** contagious, and I always **look forward** to being around her.

One of Elise's signature sayings is, *"This is the best ever!"*

If you go out for ice cream with her, you can count on her to declare,

"This is the best ice cream EVER!"

If you read a book with her, she'll surely proclaim,

"This is the best book EVER!"

If you're at the park with her, she'll undoubtedly experience a moment of sheer **jubilantion** and announce,

*"This is the best day **EVER!**"*

Her pronouncements are at the perfect moment, catching everyone off guard and provoking **endearing** responses.

Zachariah and I will often quote Elise, as we find ourselves in the midst of a **child-like joy** about something simple, echoing her anticipated moment of **glee**: *"This is the best (whatever thing we're **enjoying** at that moment) **EVER!**"*

Late last March, a few weeks into the mandated stay-at-home order, my friend texted an **adorable** report on how Elise was doing.

Here is the text:

"Yesterday I picked up some extra groceries and a couple of special **treats**.

Elise's response: *Best Coronavirus Ever!*"

I doubled over with **laughter**, my **heart** overflowing with simple **pleasure**. In my mind's **eye**, I could **see** her **gleaming**, fresh-faced countenance. In my head, my **ears** could **hear** her **sweet, engaging** voice.
Only Elise.

Or, is it really *only* Elise?

Is it possible for us to learn a lesson from this **innocent, carefree** child?

Now let me interject with the obvious: a worldwide virus is always **bad**. In a literal sense, no pandemic can be "the best ever." Please let it be clear that I **grieve** with all who have been **gravely touched** by this virus. The **damage** from Covid-19 has been vast and **horrible**, affecting everyone, whether physically, financially, mentally, or emotionally, to name only a few. Many of us have known someone who either had Covid-19 and recovered, had to be **quarantined** or **hospitalized**, or even **passed away** due to the illness.

My heart has **ached** for all people **harmed**, and the Lord **mourns** alongside us as well.

The reality is that Coronavirus has caused worldwide **death** and **sorrow**, and it's not over yet. But in the middle of this **dark** season, Elise's **lighthearted** statement was like a glimmer of **hope** for me.

It was a marvelous prompting to consider **looking** at this tragedy through the **eyes** of a child. In so doing, it helped me **perceive** another angle of God's eternal perspective, as well.

Consider the words of Joseph in Genesis 50:20.

After decades of **misery** including **abandonment, injustice, false accusation, undeserved imprisonment, isolation and separation from loved ones, mistreatment, loss, a smeared reputation, loneliness, a hopeless-looking future, being lied about, misunderstood, and forgotten**, he finally **saw** the **grander** purpose in his **suffering** and **heartache**, remarking,

*"But as for you, you meant evil against me;
but God meant it for **good**,
in order to bring it about as it is this day,
to save many people alive."*
Genesis 50:20

There is always a **greater** cause at hand. God **loves** us, and He is all about **salvation!** Is it possible that, in the middle of a **deadly** pandemic, as He faithfully does in all **bad** situations, God is working all this together for our **good** in some way?

Yes.

Not only is it possible, but it is *guaranteed*.
God has given His Word on it.

*"And we know that all things work together for **good** to **those who love God**, to those **who are the called** according to His purpose."*
Romans 8:28

When I consider Romans 8:28 in light of Elise's response to the **yummy treats** her mom brought home that day, I can't help but think about...
baking a cake.

Each ingredient in a cake does not necessarily taste **pleasant** by itself. In fact, several are **terrible** to the tongue. Have you eaten a spoonful of salt by itself? Flour on its own is **bland** and **chalky**. How about raw egg? Baking powder? Worse yet, baking soda?
Yuck.

A cake made without key ingredients though, especially those that taste **gross** on their own, is a total flop. These ingredients mixed together with the **sweetness** of honey, sugar, molasses or your favorite **sugary** substitute can create your *best dessert ever*.

CHALLENGE

It seems we **cannot escape** the massive doses of baking soda nowadays, doesn't it?

Let's **determine** to **look** for the **flavorful blessings** in the middle of the cake. **Seek** to **discover** the whip cream, chocolate chips, caramel drizzle, fudge swirl, fruit filling, or layers of icing hidden somewhere in the mix.

*And then give **thanks** to God. He is always **giving good gifts**.*

Finally, I'd be remiss to ignore a vital component of God's promise to bring **good** from **evil**. Do you notice in both 2 Corinthians 2:9 (at the top) and Romans 8:28 (above), that His covenant is for **those who love Him**? It's a blessing that is reserved only for **those who are committed and surrendered to Jesus**.

As I prayed about what to write this month, after getting permission from my friend to share this story, I found myself curious about the meaning of Elise's name. So, I looked it up.

Elise is a shortened version of the name Elisabeth, which means:

God is my Oath
Pledged to God
God is Satisfaction

If we make **God our oath**, If we **pledge ourselves to God** and **seek Him for our satisfaction**, He will indeed work all this **mess** together for our **good** and His glory.

In so doing, He truly can make this the **best Coronavirus ever**.