Dear Open Door Family,

Perhaps you've heard of Murphy's Law. *"Anything that can go wrong will."* But have you heard of O'Toole's Corollary to Murphy's Law*? "Murphy was an optimist"*. As I sat on my roof last Friday with my home-made leaf blower and extension to clean out the gutters I was desperately hoping that my contraption would work. As steep as my roof is I did not want to try to bend over and scoop out the leaves in the gutters. And the last thing I wanted to do was to haul my extension ladder all the way around my house stopping every four feet to go up and clean out the leaves. Thankfully, the contraption worked and I was able to blow all the leaves out of all the gutters in a matter of 30 minutes. Having this plan work out as well as it did made me stop and reflect on how many times in the past my ideas and schemes have NOT worked. But rather than focus on that, I started to think about God and the amazing fact that God never has to wonder about what is coming or what might happen. Nothing ever catches Him by surprise. When God created Adam and Eve He already knew exactly what this would cost Him. He knew as He blew the breath of life into Adam that at just the right time He would have to send Jesus to live and to die to pay for our sins. That is one reason I love the Christmas story. It is a reminder that God is Always in Control of all things.

Luke 2:1-7 *(NLT) At that time the Roman emperor, Augustus, decreed that a census should be taken throughout the Roman Empire. ...[3] All returned to their own ancestral towns to register for this census. [4] And because Joseph was a descendant of King David, he had to go to Bethlehem in Judea, David's ancient home. He traveled there from the village of Nazareth in Galilee. [5] He took with him Mary, his fiancée, who was now obviously pregnant. [6] And while they were there, the time came for her baby to be born. [7] She gave birth to her first child, a son. She wrapped him snugly in strips of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no lodging available for them.*

The Roman emperor issued a decree - it did not catch God by surprise. As a matter of fact I believe it was God who moved the emperor to tax the whole Roman empire - so that Jesus would be born in Bethlehem just like it had been prophesied centuries before. Sometimes we think that maybe having Jesus be born in a stable was not part of God's plan. That having Jesus come and be rejected and crucified must have come about when things went wrong after the fall. But the fact is, the time that Jesus came was perfect, the place and way that He came was exactly what God planned. We have an Awe inspiring God who is so far above us that we cannot comprehend all the variables that He controlled in the birth, life, and death of Jesus. But we can be thankful for the fact that our God is in control and we can trust Him with our lives because of that.

PRAYER: Lord God, thank You that You have never been surprised by anything. Thank You that Your plans always go exactly as You decree them. Please Lord, as Christmas approaches help me to remember ALL that You did when You sent Jesus here to earth. May my heart swell with joy as I remember Jesus birth and death were ALWAYS part of Your Amazing Grace. Thank You Lord for Christmas.

Pastor Mark Kieft
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