

123 Jehovah Jireh, our provider

This is an old testimony, but I think you'll find it encouraging...

In late 1990, our business was expanding, and so we bought a two-storey building in order to accommodate that expansion, and in our best year, we turned over just shy of a million pounds. However, the tide suddenly turned, and by 1992 we were in real trouble – that year we made a **loss** of £32,000. Clearly, I was never really cut out to be a “big businessmen”.

Have you ever created a timeline of your life? I recommend it. I started one about 30 years ago, and keeping it has been really helpful: Sue and I have looked back and seen how God has worked through the different stages of our life together. On my timeline, 1993 has just one big entry: “The Depression”.

That depression felt very severe to me, but I'm sure it wasn't, by comparison with what others have to endure. Anyway, we had to make all the staff redundant, but even so we were stuck with the business premises, in negative equity. The mortgage – plus the business rates – meant that we were likely lose our house. Then I heard that an uncle, who lived in a penthouse in New York, had left me 10% of his estate. We were saved – or so I thought! In fact, it didn't materialise for several years and was rather less than anticipated. However, God had other plans.

In 1984, when I started my own business, in a one-room rented office, a few friends who worked in the city came round one lunchtime a week, for sandwiches and prayer. Interestingly, that meeting has continued unbroken (albeit with a few different people) for 36 years, plus I didn't attend it for my several spiritual wilderness years. However, my friend Colin kept it going, and even the virus hasn't stopped it – five of us have met regularly for ‘Friday prayers’ by Zoom.

Anyway, back in 1993, our group (which has included, for the past 32 years, our financial advisor) was praying for our desperate financial situation. One lunchtime, as I was coming back from the shops, there was a beautiful rainbow covering the office. That Friday, I told my friends about the rainbow, and said I felt that God was saying, “Don't panic! I've got it all in hand.”

A month or so later, a family friend died. I had agreed to be her executor, and when I went to read the will, there didn't appear to be any major beneficiaries. “Where does the residue go?” I asked the solicitor. “Oh, it's for you,” she said. We had absolutely no idea about this! Actually, we were thankful for our ignorance, because Sue had visited her often, and in her later years, she got very, very difficult, but Sue persevered. If we had known that we were the principal beneficiaries, it might have been quite difficult.

Anyway, that money – from the sale of her house when she went into care a few years earlier – saved us! And the office was eventually sold.

But that isn't the end of the story. When I got the news from the solicitor, I rang my financial advisor, and told him about the legacy.

“That's amazing!” he said. “Last night, I was working on one of my portfolios: the lady had died, and I was finalising her account. I realised that it had been exemplary: we had built it really well. But I said to myself that those funds would now go to another financial advisor to manage.”

Not so! That money was simply transferred to the portfolio of another of his clients – us! And, yes, the lady in question was our friend.

But there's one more piece of the jigsaw.

It was then that I remembered about that rainbow. I saw it after I had been to the shops to buy some flowers – freesias. Why? Because a good friend of ours had just had a stroke, and we understood that the sense of smell was a faculty that often continues after others have failed. And yes, it was the self-same friend – Sue knew that the freesias were her favourite flowers.

I hope that encourages you as much as it encourages me, each time I tell the story!

Paul Bev. 17.5.20