

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 5:4; Psalm 119:113, 114, 116

HYMN: Near to the Heart of God

*There is a place of comfort sweet, near to the heart of God;
A place where we our Savior meet, near to the heart of God."*

ON GRIEVING

I want to tell you of the story of how I lost a good friend who felt like my own grandmother, and how the Lord healed the pain of my soul. I share it with you in the hope that it will help you sometime, in your life.

My children and I met "Grandma Ann" when my son was a small baby and my daughter was 2. (Nearly 5 years have passed!) We'd visit her every week and we'd always be greeted with cheerful enthusiasm ("How are ya?!"), a bright smile and a warm welcome. We'd walk her to lunch, look through family photo albums, sing hymns together at SonShine meetings and get to know family members when our visits coincided.

Then the inevitable time arrived. After a brief time of suffering, the Lord brought Grandma Ann home. It happened so quickly that it felt like a dream. The day of her funeral arrived. The children and I saw her one last time and greeted Grandma Ann's daughters that we had known. As we waited in the car in the procession, I had a talk with the Lord in my heart. It went something like this: "Lord, I feel scared. What is there to be afraid of?" He quietly revealed to me : "pride". "Pride?" I thought for a few moments. "Oh...I'm afraid to look horrible, and bring attention to myself. OK, Lord, I give You my pride." Peace entered my soul. I recalled in my imagination the scene in Scripture when people grieved. They thoroughly let their hearts "wail"! I realized that it was not the Lord's way to fight back tears, keep a stiff smile and try to think of other matters. No, rather this time is a precious gift from Him- to celebrate our loved one, to thank Him for their life and to weep at our loss.

As the procession began, the beautiful song filled the church and as I walked with my children, the tears flowed. My soul felt so good to release the sorrow, like a cleansing flood. My sobs seemed to echo against the walls of the church, and my 4 year-old son kept asking me why I was crying as we walked. But I didn't care. The Lord gave me the sweet gift of openly grieving. As a shy person, my way would be to keep my tears to quiet moments at home. But the Lord, in His goodness, led me otherwise.

As I sat down I wondered how I could get through the next hour- I wondered if I could ever love a resident like that again- it hurt too much. I wondered if my tissue would last- I had not planned to cry. But again, the Lord provided. As the minister read God's Word, it felt like a balm for my soul's pain, and my tears dried up. To me, it was miraculous! God's "living and active Word" healed me!

His Word so fittingly describes my experience: "Sustain me according to Your word, that I may live...I love Your law. You are my hiding place and my shield; I wait for

Your Word” (Psalm 119:113,114,116). Also, “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted” (Matthew 5:4).

The next time you are sorrowful, remember that tears are His gift, and that His Word can be a real help for your soul. Amen!



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