

Eight Years Past

by Kevin Ophoff

Almost eight years have passed since the day we got the call all parents dread. Winter is threatening to envelop us once again in it's shortened days and cold desolation. This year the feeling of falling down the deep well of depression doesn't seem so pronounced as it did the first few years. I even bought a ski pass for the first time since the accident.

It is not that this year is filled with any more sense of hope than in past years but that I have been able to put the heartache and pain into a perspective I am able to live with. I almost said, "move on", but that's not really what happens. No. I've learned to carry the pain.

I'm certain that I would not have made it this far were it not for my belief that God has my daughter safe in His hand and I will see her again. Some, my former pastor included, have changed their beliefs in God's absolute sovereignty in order to allow for a weaker God who couldn't prevent Catherine's accident. They have also had to discount several portions of the Bible as the inspired word of God, including the book of Job. To be honest, my beliefs were shaken to the core. I had to reevaluate everything. Was God napping or on vacation when the Devil did his worst? Was it really fair of God to let his most faithful servant Job suffer at the hands of Satan when He could have prevented it? Just what kind of God have we vowed to serve anyway? The battle raged in my head for some time. But, by using the same authoritative Word that I trusted before the accident, I came to a deeper understanding of God's eternal perspective and a renewed sense of His sovereignty.

If I had given up or changed my beliefs I really would have lost it all. The enemy would have won. Had I doubted the truth of the Bible and the authenticity of it's message, my faith would have foundered on a sea of unbelief, having no clear hope for today or tomorrow. Instead, having faith that God is who He says He is gives me a Rock to which I can cling. The secret then is to continue to pursue God even when God seems to be dealing unfairly with us and things are bad. We must believe always that God has our best in mind. His thoughts are higher than our thoughts, His ways higher than my ways (Isaiah 55:9). Who can fathom the ways of God (Job 11:7)? I no longer have the driving urge to have an answer to every question. There are many things that I can just accept "on faith".

Life is hard, but God must have a good reason for allowing some people to be the ones who live with the burden of losing children, just as others bear their own tragedies. As we emerge from the dark and decide to once again live in the light, one question remains to be answered: For what purpose, now, do we live? Perhaps we still use our gifts to glorify Him. "Though He slay me, yet will I hope in Him" (Job 13:15). I have grown weary of wondering what good will come of it. I'm just staying faithful and waiting, trying not to worry, letting the wounds bleed or heal as he brings the salve.

God continues to fulfill the promise of Romans 8:28, as He works all things for good. At Catherine's memorial service about two dozen people accepted the gospel message. We are still in contact with many of them as they grow in their faith and continue to walk with the Lord. Our ministries were launched by an increasing awareness that time is short, and that children are our most precious gift and responsibility. We gratefully collect the stories of success from parents using the Love and Logic parenting methods we teach.

It's very disappointing when we are unable to help others who suffer because they have no faith. We can only pray for them. Our job is just to be the best followers of Jesus Christ that we can be. To be slow to anger, abundant in loving kindness (Exodus 34:6), and sometimes, just to stand (Ephesians 6:13) can be a pretty powerful witness in itself.