

STORIES OF LOVE
LENTEN DEVOTIONAL
2010



February 17, 2010

I often ponder how my grandfather provided for his seven children during the hard years of the Depression when there was no work. What sacrifices did my grandparents make to feed, clothe and educate my father and his siblings?

Before I was even born my father and his siblings gathered together to celebrate not only the birth of Christ, but also the birth of their father, my grandfather Manuel, who was born on December 24. I remember how every Christmas Eve the entire family of my aunts, uncles and cousins gathered to celebrate these two important births. In the midst of our celebration we paused to sing Christmas carols and listen to scripture. The lights would be turned off. My grandfather, holding up one small, lit candle would stand and proclaim, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life."

My unspoken question was answered. For him the hard times were never times of darkness because he knew that Christ was always with them—guiding, nurturing and protecting them.

My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. John 15:12,13

February 18, 2010

God gave me 2 wonderful parents who weren't perfect, but they were perfect for me. When I was born I already had 3 sisters; we had 3 dogs; I went to 3 schools; in college I joined Delta Delta Delta; I had 3 different jobs; I bought 3 Chevys; I broke 3 bones; I married 1 great guy; we were blessed with 3 amazing children; we insure our house with "Triple A".

Wait! What's with all the threes? What does this have to do with the devotional or the theme of love and self-sacrifice? It's because of the most important Three of all, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Since the very beginning, this Trinity has been with me, offering love, mercy and guidance. God created it all. He provided the greatest role model and lovingly sacrificed His Son. He gave us the gift of the Holy Spirit to help us navigate through all of this "stuff". Knowing that, I can look back and see the love given and sacrifices made for me and others by God, by parents, by sisters, by teachers, by friends, by my husband, by my children... and hopefully, I have offered the same love and sacrifices in humble obedience as well for my God, parents, teachers, friends, family, church family and even strangers.

Gracious Heavenly Father: thank You for all of the influences You place in our lives. Thank you for the concept and each example of self-sacrifice and amazing, amazing love. Thank you for the capacity to recognize the blessing in each. In Jesus' precious Name, Amen.

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February 19, 2010

I recently had an interesting experience at our local carwash. Just as the worker signaled that my car was ready, I received a phone call. I quickly gave the worker my claim ticket and tip, got in the car, and drove off. As I approached a traffic light, I looked down at my cup-holder to discover a twenty-dollar bill. I was still on the phone so I couldn't react. It took me a few seconds to realize that a worker probably found the money while vacuuming. When you think about it, typically two to three workers attend to the car during the wash process. So if I guessed correctly, the first person to work on my car found it. Not only was the first worker honest but so were everyone else that came in contact with the car.

My instant reaction was skepticism. I thought it was a way to take advantage of me. Did they think I would be so impressed with their honesty that I would, *not only return the twenty*, but also hand out twenties to *all* the workers? This was a crazy thought! Who in their right mind, making minimum wage, would come up with a scheme to plant a twenty-dollar bill?

When I go to the carwash I *always* turn over a neat and organized interior. Not only because it allows them to clean better but also for fear that they will (yes, I'll admit it) steal something. I'm assuming the money was under a seat probably dropped by my daughter.

When I snapped out of my cynicism tears welled up. I was amazed at the act of selflessness. I would have never known the money was gone. They knew that. It takes a love of God and God's people to treat strangers that way. It may have been a brief experience but it had an impact.

How often do we go about our day in fear and doubt rather than in love and faith? How often are we too busy to recognize other people? Part of my reaction was guilt. I didn't treat those workers well. I didn't even notice them. I was too concerned with my life to pay attention, yet they showed me love and respect. My favorite quote by Maya Angelou is "I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."

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February 20, 2010

When I was in second grade my father's wife adopted me – legally made me her daughter. As a youngster I did not understand all that was going on. I did understand that this woman was now “really” my mother.

No, this legal action did not change some feelings and thought immediately over night. But there was a growing sense of security that I felt even then. Mom already had her “own” daughter, plus she got my birth brother in the same package as me. Poor Mom!

It was not until I was on my own here in California that Mom and I began to have a friendship. Which means that I also learned much history of many different family members. But through all the changes, moves, and growing up Mom and I have remained close. Through this closeness I have been able to see with my heart's eyes the sacrifices Mom gave. She was certainly not ready to parent her own daughter let alone two more kids. My father's and her relationship was never the best. I learned she stayed in that relationship until “Tom and Janet were almost on their own.”

Mom is the one who made sure I went to Sunday School and youth group and later to church. She gave me love, a home, a family, discipline, encouragement, hope, a life. How like my Savior who sacrificed His life for me to have these and more...eternity.

Galatians 4:5: “...in order that he might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as children.”

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First Sunday in Lent: February 21, 2010

The Sundays in Lent are different from the rest of the days and are not counted as part of the forty days. The Sundays in Lent are for reflecting on the Resurrection. Each Lenten Sunday is a mini-Easter! We have read stories of sacrifice; now we take time to enter the joy of life in Christ, our hope of glory.

Down through history, Christians have written beautiful songs expressing joy in Easter. The poetry of the lyrics focuses our thoughts on the abundant life God gives us in Christ.

Because He Lives

God sent His Son, they called him Jesus;
He came to love, heal and forgive;
He lived and died to buy my pardon,
An empty grave is there to prove my Savior lives.

How sweet to hold a newborn baby,
And feel the pride, and joy he gives;
But greater still the calm assurance,
This child can face uncertain days because He lives.

And then one day I'll cross the river;
I'll fight life's final war with pain;
And then as death gives way to victory,
I'll see the lights of glory and I'll know He lives.

Because He lives, I can face tomorrow;
Because He lives, all fear is gone;
Because I know He holds the future,
And life is worth the living just because He lives.

February 22, 2010

It has been said that those who serve with love light a pathway to God. However, one of the most shining examples of self-giving love is that of a child who does not even yet fully understand the nature of this love nor its life-long impact on those to whom it is given.

We hadn't lived in our new neighborhood for very long. Our children had quickly made friends with all of the other kids on our block. One in particular, however, came from a family that was actually quite destitute. We did not know it at the time, but would soon learn that not only did the father lose his job, but the little girl had developed a serious health problem.

One day we noticed that some of the things from their home were being taken out of the house. The little girl was crying and begging her daddy not to take her things away. It was at this time we found out the truth and sadness of their situation.

Suddenly, both of our boys looked at me and asked if we could help. I asked them how they wanted to do so. They immediately went into their bedrooms and brought out toys they thought their little friend would like. Next they went into the pantry and cleaned out as much food as they thought they could. Then they went into the garage and brought in dog food and biscuits for their puppy.

Finally they crafted a handmade card that read, "Jesus Loves You and So Do We." "Here," they said, "Now they will know that Jesus hasn't forgotten them because we didn't forget them." Remember to let the light of your love shine too!

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February 23, 2010

Over the past few weeks, I have been spending more and more time visiting my ailing father who has become greatly weakened by various progressing illnesses.

My father, who I always admired as a strong and self-confident man, now needs assistance with some of the most basic tasks such as walking, eating and getting himself dressed.

Through this hardship, my mom has always been there for him. This year, they will be celebrating 58 years of marriage, and my mom has always provided support and encouragement to him – both during the good times and the bad times.

Her constant commitment to her husband “in sickness and in health” illustrates the love and faithfulness they committed to years ago when they both took their marriage vows, having no idea what God had in store for their lives.

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February 24, 2010

During the later part of my teenage years my life appeared not to be going anywhere. I lived with my father and younger brother in a small community in the high desert of Los Angeles County. He was going through his second divorce and not at home that often. Fortunately for my brother and me, he was ending a relationship with a woman that did not provide many happy memories. Although I had done well in school, sports, and was working most of high school, I began to struggle with staying motivated to maintain my high standards. My grades suffered my last semester in high school. I dropped out of playing football for the local college and failed a number of my first year college classes. At home my relationship with my father began to become very turbulent. Life appeared to be making little to no progress.

I believe God made a difference in turning my life around through my relationship with my grandparents. My grandparents lived two miles away. Although my stepmother had worked to isolate them from our lives, they reappeared now that she was gone. From growing up during the great depression, raising five children, and living many years of life, they possessed endless amounts of wisdom. My grandparents were always present, always patient, and they always listened. The simple acts of kindness, warmth, and love with their presence guided and motivated me to look for a positive future.

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February 25, 2010

Over the years I have been at MPC, I have experienced first hand the caring for each other in the time of need. We lift each other up in times of illness, death, unemployment and any number of life's challenges. I have watched members extend their generosity and grace to those in need at our church, in our community, and around the world. Never before have I experienced the "family" in the expression "church family" as I have here at MPC. We are truly blessed to have the love and support of such a God-loving group of people. And let us remember that what we do for each other, we do for Him.

“For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.” Matthew 25:35-40

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February 26, 2010

She sets about her work vigorously, her arms are strong for her tasks. Proverbs 31: 17
She opens her arms to the poor and extends her hands to the needy. Proverbs 31:20
She speaks with wisdom and faithful instruction is on her tongue. Proverbs 31: 26

As a young mom with two small children, (Peter was not born yet) I struggled with many things. One of the things that really had me feeling inadequate was “laundry”. For some reason, I was always knee deep in it. Not only that, but there was always baskets of clothes that needed ironing that I just could not complete, sometimes even start. I must have made mention of this in front of my mother-in-law Pat one day. I am sure that I would never have asked her to help me, but she said “Sone, why don’t I come over some day soon and help you out. Tell me the day and I will be there”. I remember thinking “Really? She would do that for me?” She didn’t say; let me know if I can help. She had me pick a day, and she was one hundred percent present and giving of herself.

Well, the day came, and Pat arrived on my doorstep with her laundry products and an ironing board and rolled up sleeves. She is not one that fools around when she offers her services.

We spent six plus hours sending loads in, drying them, folding them and ironing from my large baskets that I had been hiding in my closets. Pat showed me what to wash with what, what to use for the best outcome and how to keep everything in tip top shape.

Pat is Dan’s stepmother. She helped raise four children (Dan and his siblings) while working full-time as a “head surgical nurse”. Pat has given to me, many times, the gift of her time, wisdom, and wonderful food, but I can’t take credit for being “special”. Pat is giving to everyone. She is a gifted quilter and heads up a quilt ministry where small quilts are given to children who are separated from their parents by social services, or the law. These beautiful quilts are made with love, to make children feel comfort and have something to hold on to during a trauma. I have witnessed Pat caring for a relative or friend who is ill. She does this like a mom cares tenderly for her child. There is never an air of “what can I get out of this”. It is pure, selfless giving.

Even as we speak, Pat is giving of herself to her “boy” Dan. Dan has been staying with his Dad and Pat Monday through Friday for the past six months while he is working in San Luis for “Front Porch Ministries”. Pat makes dinner every night she can, and even makes sure Dan has a good lunch to take to the job. She is making sure that he feels loved and cared for while he is away from his family.

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February 27, 2010

I was ready to be sought by those who did not ask for me; I was ready to be found by those who did not seek me. I said “Behold me, behold me,”... Isaiah 65:1

As with many new parents, I found myself with a child on the way and many thoughts of “What will I say when he asks this or that”? I knew full well that the question about God would be chief among those that I needed to have an answer for... I had grown up with a fairly strict Christian upbringing, but had slipped away through years, letting the world nudge its way in.

I was born an engineer... thankfully the University of Missouri was willing to give me a piece of paper to prove it, for a price :) My life is one of gathering data and ordering it so that I can see patterns... trends... outliers... this is the way I approached this most daunting question. I painstakingly read through Scripture, followed by commentary & historical addendums, changing the order, but never really ‘getting it’.

Years later, I would be comforted when reading C.S. Lewis’ *Surprised by Joy*. Lewis describes how in his early life, he struggled to pray “correctly”. He put conditions on what made an acceptable prayer, and so, slowly but surely, made praying a punitive thing. In his words, it became “a quite intolerable burden”. Isaiah tells us that God will deliver his own, but on his terms, not ours. Thankfully, I’ve learned to slow down and listen for the still small voice. Ask for wisdom with an open heart and He will answer.

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Second Sunday in Lent: February 28, 2010

Thine is the Glory

Thine is the glory, risen, conquering Son;
Endless is the victory
Thou o'er death hast won.
Angels in bright raiment
Rolled the stone away,
Kept the folded grave clothes
Where Thy body lay.
Thine is the glory, risen, conquering Son;
Endless is the victory Thou o'er death hast won.

Lo! Jesus meets us, Risen, from the tomb;
Lovingly He greets us,
Scatters fear and gloom;
Let His church with gladness
Hymns of triumph sing,
For her Lord now liveth;
Death hath lost its sting.
Thine is the glory, risen, conquering Son;
Endless is the victory Thou o'er death hast won.

No more we doubt Thee, Glorious Prince of Life!
Life is naught without Thee;
Aid us in our strife;
Make us more than conquerors,
Through Thy deathless love;
Bring us safe through Jordan
With Thy power and love.
Thine is the glory, Risen, conquering Son;
Endless is the victory Thou o'er death hast won.

March 1, 2010

I worked at Bel Air Presbyterian Church for two years with a youth group known as the Bel Air Brats. Sometimes they deserved the name. Other times they surprised me.

Each week I took kids down the hill to a home for elderly people. It wasn't pleasant. It smelled. Some of the elderly people yelled. But the kids kept going. At first we stayed together as a group playing games. But my "Brats" started building relationships. Soon I turned them loose.

Then I got the phone call from a mom. Her beautiful, professional model daughter had a skin disease normally found on old people. The doctor said, "She must be getting real close and giving hugs." I expected a royal chewing out. But the mom said, "I know the kind of world my daughter is living in. I wanted to thank you that you helped her care enough to get a disease."

That mom had her priorities straight. If her daughter learned to hug the unhugable she'd be okay.

She knew the commandment Jesus gave His disciples this night in the Upper Room "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another as I have loved you."

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March 2, 2010

Selfless love is often most appreciated and remembered during times of great loss. My dad, Cliff Hauenstein, died a year ago at Christmas very unexpectedly. While our family was in tremendous shock and pain, it was the selfless love and actions of the Pastors, Deacons, Small Group members and church and neighborhood friends who gathered to support us, prepared and brought in meals, sent thoughtful cards and beautiful flowers and plants. The memorial service and Deacon hosted reception all took place between Christmas and New Years at MPC in 2008.

My mother, Ruth, along with Tom and I will always remember and be thankful for how friends made time to care for our family, especially when it was not convenient for most people. This Christ-like love, abundantly given in the midst of our sorrow, shows us that God's love is alive and living through his followers at Moorpark Presbyterian Church!

With sincere thanks and appreciation,
Denise Piehn

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March 3, 2010

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.

The comfort we receive means strengthening, helping, making strong. Just as God, in his love for us, comforts, strengthens and helps in our time of need, then as believers we are able to bring comfort to others.

We see trials and tribulations in our church family, and from the illnesses we are familiar with to the lost jobs, lost homes and financial difficulties, there is now a greater need for us to “pay it forward.”

I am happy to be a member of a church that recognizes the needs of others and whose members gladly give their time and effort to pass along to others the comfort and strength we receive from God. From shaved heads and dinners prepared for families to special church services to offer up prayers for those in need, the love and support we receive from God is evident here.

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March 4, 2010

Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Exodus 20:8

When I was seventeen years old, the workers in my hometown, a small copper mining town in Arizona, went on a long strike. The townspeople had to find some kind of work and the only thing available was work in the cotton fields.

One Sunday, my school friends and I headed to the cotton fields. We quickly found out that no one worked on Sunday. As we walked towards the fields, a well-dressed man called out to us saying, "Sundays are for you to give thanks to God for what you have received in life. Thank God for your opportunity to work and earn, now go to church"! Embarrassed, we turned around and went home.

Whatever happened to those "best-dressed to go to church" Sundays when businesses were closed and everyone faithfully attended church?

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March 5, 2010

The Surprise Sacrifice

I was NOT looking forward to this meeting. " It's ONLY for a few months," I told myself...my thoughts echoing my friend's words. She had asked me to help out with her 83-year-old mom, Barbara, who was recovering at home from recent hip replacement surgery. I had agreed to do her laundry once a week...for a few months until she could once again perform the task herself. Barbara lived in low-income housing for the elderly....so, there were NO frills in her life-style. As I knocked on the door, I was greeted by a cheerful voice that belonged to a little white-haired lady hunched over in her chair, watching TV. Her hands were terribly crippled with arthritis, and her walker was nearby, but NONE of this stopped her from being happy. She frequently referred to her blessings & how God had provided everything she needed!! OK....I GUESS I could do this small task for her!!

This weekly 'sacrifice' became a delightful encounter I looked forward to! She clomped along beside me down the hall to the laundry room and we chatted away while the clothes washed. Our talk was NEVER about her problems. She was very much alive with a personality and caring attitude that made the time together so wonderful. She 'adopted' me, calling me her " other daughter" and we went out to lunch and spent time together...She died last Spring at the age of 97 and I still miss her terribly....those 14 years of friendship are something I cherish. Barbara was truly filled with the Holy Spirit and it spilled out on me every time I was with her.

Whenever I remember Barbara, this verse from Matthew 6:19 is there, too....." Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.....for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." I never felt such all-encompassing love like this from anyone. She really knew that love for others was the treasure that the Holy Spirit led her to pass on.

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March 6, 2010

During World War II, there were a number of Christian families that risked everything to hide Jews from the Nazis. One of these families in the Netherlands, the ten Booms, hid several Jews until the Nazis found them out and imprisoned the whole family in a concentration camp.

One of the daughters, Corrie survived the camp and wrote a book that told their story of imprisonment and the deaths of almost all of her family members in the camp.

Her faith in Christ was forged in the crucible of the concentration camp. Her sister's desire to witness to others in prison was a living example to Corrie of how to live despite life threatening obstacles. Corrie asked for and received a spirit of forgiveness from Christ. This was tested when years later she met a former Nazi prison guard who worked at her facility at the same time she was there she met years later, who had come to Christ. Through Christ's love, Corrie was able to forgive the repentant man.

Remembering her perseverance through extraordinary adversity helps put a perspective on the daily "concerns of this world".

Her book was titled "The Hiding Place", after Psalm 119:114 "Thou art my hiding place and my shield. I hope in thy Word."

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Third Sunday in Lent: March 7, 2010

He Lives

I serve a risen Savior, He's in the world today;
I know that He is living, Whatever men may say;
I see His hand of mercy, I hear His voice of cheer,
And just the time I need Him He's always near.

He lives, He lives,
Christ Jesus lives today!
He walks with me and He talks with me
Along life's narrow way.
He lives, He lives, salvation to impart!
You ask me how I know He lives:
He lives within my heart.

In all the world around me I see His loving care,
And though my heart grows weary I never will despair;
I know that He is leading through all the stormy blast,
The day of His appearing will come at last.

Rejoice, rejoice, O Christian,
Lift up your voice and sing
Eternal hallelujahs to Jesus Christ the King!
The hope of all who seek Him, the help of all who find,
None other is so loving, so good and kind.

He lives, He lives,
Christ Jesus lives today!
He walks with me and He talks with me
Along life's narrow way.
He lives, He lives, salvation to impart!
You ask me how I know He lives:
He lives within my heart.

March 8, 2010

I have personally felt the self-giving love of my church family on more than one occasion. And, actually, I've also experienced the same type of self-giving love from co-workers; some of who may not have even been believers, but whom God used to help minister to me, and helped me see Christ's love in action.

A few years ago, after having my driving privileges taken away for a full year, after having had a seizure, I had to rely upon others to drive me to and from work, to and from church, to and from any church related event, like Men's Breakfast, music rehearsals, etc. It was humbling, and truth be told, very uncomfortable to know that I was causing others to go out of their way, giving of their valuable time, on my behalf.

We're taught to be self-sufficient, and to not be a burden to others. It took awhile before I was able to see that my predicament was actually helping to give others in the church and at work an opportunity to feel needed and useful, and to be able to use their natural gifts of service to others.

I experienced first hand how God intends us to interact with one another, how serving and accepting that service from others really goes hand in hand. It's sort of a spiritual pay-it-forward methodology that I believe God intends us to honor, and to follow. I know how blessed we are to have brothers and sisters in Christ, willing to help each other out regardless of the situation we may find ourselves in. God is amazing!

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March 9, 2010

I have been blessed with love that was shown to me that changed my life and the life of my family. This self-giving love is from my mother and father in law.

We, as parents, have an idea of what the “perfect” spouse is for our children. We begin praying for them and their future spouse from the day they are born. The day that their son told them he was getting married to me, they must have been a little disappointed. As a nonbeliever, I’m sure I was not their idea of a perfect wife for him.

But, instead they treated me as if I was their very own daughter. The love and caring they have shown me from the first day that I met them can only be described as a Christ-like love. And through their love, their prayers, and the way they have lived such a faithful life themselves, they planted the seeds in me that would eventually bring me and my family to Christ’s love. I hope that someday when my sons bring home their future wives, I can be as loving, accepting, and faithful in my prayer as they were for me.

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March 10, 2010

"And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." Ephesians 4:32

All the mothers I know have modeled for me the self-giving nature of love. Being a mom makes you crazy in a good way. Mothers will do anything to make their children happy. From the day they are born, our children demand from us, pull at our hearts with their tears, and often even embarrass us. And yet mothers tend to their children with a boundless joy. Motherhood requires endless sacrifice but is also one of the most rewarding occupations there is.

If only we could show Christ's love to others as mothers do to their children. . .

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March 11, 2010

Dear God: Thank you for what You have given me today. From Your hand it is good, regardless of how I feel about it today. Help me to see Your purpose and trust Your plan. Amen.

Attitude is everything. So true, especially when it comes to self-giving. My mom modeled a non-complaining spirit whenever my dad announced yet another move. My dad loved to change things around (whether it was furniture or a “new” hotel to manage). My mom loved being a homemaker and was challenged when home became a series of adjoining hotel rooms and a two-burner stove. In my growing-up years, my family made 8 or more moves to different downtown hotels throughout the US and even abroad- all were usually mid-year, unexpected and quick. There was no house to sell, so in three weeks we’d be heading off (3 kids and a dog) to our “new home”. Mom would say that if the new place was great – “what an adventure we would have” and if it was really crummy, “it wouldn’t last long”. As a kid I never complained about the moving because I didn’t ‘catch it’ from anyone. It was just what our family did.

So very often, God reminds me of my mom—who loved my dad and our being together more than any home or place we lived – and gave up things she valued (friendships, a sense of belonging, home “treasures” etc.) I am ever grateful that my childhood “adventures”, good or bad, were seasoned with expectant excitement and not tainted by complaint.

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March 12, 2010

Growing up in a small town in Mississippi, everyone knew everybody...and everybody's business. There was no escaping a watchful eye whether at the short order counter in the drug store or the balcony at church. Speaking of church, there was a lovely friend of my mother's named Miss Caroline, who, because of tragic circumstances, was raising her three grandchildren. Money was tight and resources were stretched, but Miss Caroline always lived her faith. If the church doors were open, she and her neatly attired grandchildren were there. Additionally, whenever there was a call for help, Miss Caroline was the first to volunteer and to give from her meager resources.

Miss Caroline made quite a positive impression on me, and in later years, my mother and I continued to share a great respect for her. How did Miss Caroline accomplish all she did at her age and on such a tight budget? She established noble priorities and never compromised. What amazing lessons I learned from her regarding faith, family and home!

My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. John 15:12,13

March 13, 2010

As I watched my parents care for their aging parents I realized what a true act of love and devotion it was. During my father's parents' final years and days, he was a constant source of love and strength. Being the oldest of six children he was used to taking on responsibility, but watching your parents decline takes much love and courage. During my grandfather's final days, Dad was there everyday trying to make him comfortable. My grandfather was able to pass peacefully at home with all six children and nine grandchildren gathered by his bedside.

During my grandmother's final years my mom was always in close contact with her. As she was forced to downsize from a house to an apartment to assisted living and then to a nursing home, Mom was there. During her final days, Mom was there everyday, feeding and talking to her.

It is never easy to have a loved one die and I do not like to think of the days when I will be where my parents were. But through their examples and with God's love and support, I will be there for them with the same love and devotion they showed to their parents.

My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. John 15:12,13

Fourth Sunday in Lent: March 14, 2010

Jesus Lives and So Shall I

Jesus lives, and so shall I,
Death! thy sting is gone forever.
He who deigned for me to die,
Lives, the bands of death to sever.
He shall raise me with the just:
Jesus is my hope and trust.

Jesus lives and reigns supreme;
And, His kingdom still remaining,
I shall also be with Him,
Ever living, ever reigning.
God has promised: be it must;
Jesus is my hope and trust.

Jesus lives, I know full well,
Naught from Him my heart can sever,
Life nor death nor powers of hell,
Joy nor grief, henceforth forever.
None of all His saints is lost;
Jesus is my hope and trust.

Jesus lives, and death is now
But my entrance into glory.
Courage, then, my soul,
For thou hast a crown of life before thee;
Thou shalt find thy hopes were just;
Jesus is the Christian's trust.

March 15, 2010

For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. Ephesians 2:10

This passage reminds us of our very generous church family, and how so many give their time, talent and tithes to reach out to others and spread God's love. From musicians to maintenance; from pastors to painters; from teachers to technicians; from scrap- bookers to small groups; from deacons to dramas; from evangelizers to elders; all give so much of themselves to glorify God at MPC.

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March 16, 2010

"You can tell what they are by what they do." Matthew 7:16

Ten years ago, my mother was living in a new retirement residence in her hometown. Many of her friends lived there and she was very happy. Since this facility offered apartments, assisted care living, and a nursing home, this is where she intended to spend the rest of her life. Problems developed when her kidneys failed and she needed dialysis. The nearest place to receive dialysis was 40 minutes away and she needed to go three days a week for a three-hour treatment (about 4 ½ hours a day). The only solution seemed to be for her to move across the country to live with me in California or my brother in Texas, a move she dreaded. That's when a group of five "angels" stepped in. They had seen the problem faced by people in town who needed dialysis and offered to coordinate and provide transportation for them. My mother had never met these people, but they gave up half a day nearly every week to provide her this needed transportation, rain, sleet or snow, for the rest of her life, even as her health declined and she became less responsive to their kindness. This act of unselfish love set an inspiring example to the many people who became aware of it – my mother's family and friends, people at the nursing home, employees at the hospital, and other patients at the dialysis unit.

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March 17, 2010

And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased. Hebrews 13:16

My mother had recently been ill and was home from the hospital. My wife and I had long-standing plans to go out of town with another couple, and our daughter offered to stay with her grandmother so we could be away without worry.

Our friends drove to our destination, and we enjoyed a wonderful time of friendship and fellowship on our journey. Upon reaching our destination, we found our rented house and freshened up to go to dinner.

While at dinner, I received a phone call from our daughter. My mother was not doing well and she needed to be taken back to the hospital. Without hesitation, our friends offered to make the three and one-half hour drive back home immediately so I could be with my mother. Although this meant a loss for them of the time we had planned to spend together, there was no hint of disappointment from them, only concern for my mother and for me.

Sacrifice is the act of giving up something of yours for the benefit of others. I will never forget the selfless manner in which this sacrifice was made for me.

My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. John 15:12,13

March 18, 2010

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith.... and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God, not by works so that no one can boast. For we are God's Workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works which God prepared in advance for us to do. Ephesians 2:8-10

New Years Day college football bowl games can be inspirational. Yes, even for those who, like myself, don't side with a Pac-Ten local rivalry. The anticipation of the best teams battling for the bragging rights is some of the fun, but the dynamic of seeing an underdog team rise to the challenge and silence a boaster can add a new dimension to start a New Year.

This year, the Sugar Bowl was inspirational in a totally different way. We were watching the game with Keene family, our friends we were spending New Years with. Because it was cold outside up at the cabin in Big Bear, we casually watched the game. I don't think any of us really cared who won. As the game ended, Ryan (9 yrs old) pointed out that the Florida quarterback, Tim Tebow, wrote bible verses on the glare paint below his eyes on his cheeks. Now, we all were fixed to the TV to see what it said. EPH was under his right eye. 2:8-10 was under his left eye. Linda Keene screamed out as if we were all playing Jeopardy, "I know that verse from VBS a few years ago... Saved through faith..."she and all the kids continued with the song they learned that week.

As we drove down the mountain and left the cold snow behind us, I realized that was a great verse to start the New Year with.

My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. John 15:12,13

March 19, 2010

Matthew 26:27 Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying “Drink from it, all of you.”

Throughout the past year, I’ve had to rely on the support of others. Challenges have forced my predictable schedule and daily activity into the unknown. For someone like me, with a strong independent nature, it is difficult to accept the generosity I’ve received. The support I’m referring to was not financial, but rather in the loving concern of fellow Christians from within my church family. Although I didn’t seek such attention, it came to me anyway and has opened my eyes to the need we sometimes have, of leaning on each other in such times.

As for my hesitance to accept these gifts of friendship and love, I need only look to the cross and see the sacrifice of love Jesus gave to us. A sacrifice I willingly accept and one I would be lost without. It seems trivial to me now that I could welcome such an ultimate gift as Jesus and somehow feel reluctant to accept the love and assistance of my Christian brothers and sisters. It has become obvious to me that it’s as important to receive the gift of love from others as it is for us to give such gifts in kind. So don’t hesitate to receive such a gift from others. It might be a gift from Jesus, and who are we to refuse such a gift?

My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. John 15:12,13

March 20, 2010

I hesitate to write this, for many reasons. Many years ago – at least several lifetimes ago - I found myself going through a divorce. I went through the thought processes, feelings, torture, repentance, giving and receiving forgiveness and healing that I know many of you have experienced.

While my own faith and sense of power in God grew amazingly; while my relationship in Jesus showed a strength; I would never have imagined – it would be the church of God – the people - that joyfully surprised me.

There was one older couple in that church who just threw their unconditional arms of love and sacrifice around me – never to let me go. They have both since died and I continue to feel and know and pass on their unconditional love. . Even as I write this I write through blurred vision just remembering them, their actions, their words of acceptance and encouragement, the invitations to their home for meals or just to let me be alone in their back yard or join in conversation, meals – life with their family – during all special occasions and holiday. What light in a time of dark. What a gift!

You might be thinking, “Well that doesn’t seem to be such a sacrifice.” But for me it was received as a beautiful, unspeakable sacrifice of love.

I cannot but think of our Lord’s beautiful and unspeakable sacrifice on the cross because of His unfathomable unconditional love for each of us. The fact that He has victory over death gives me victory over my past and brings His light into all my life.

John 3:16, 17: God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world; but that the world should be save through Him.

My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. John 15:12,13

Fifth Sunday in Lent: March 21, 2010

Christ is Alive

Christ is alive! Let Christians sing.
The cross stands empty to the sky.
Let streets and homes with praises ring.
Love, drowned in death, shall never die.

Christ is alive! No longer bound
to distant years in Palestine,
but saving, healing, here and now,
and touching every place and time.

Not throned above, remotely high,
untouched, unmoved by human pains,
but daily, in the midst of life,
our Savior with the Father reigns.

In every insult, rift, and war
where color, scorn or wealth divide,
Christ suffers still, yet loves the more,
and lives, where even hope has died.

Women and men, in age and youth,
can feel the Spirit, hear the call,
and find the Way, the Life, the Truth,
revealed in Jesus, free for all.

Christ is alive, and comes to bring
good news to this and every age,
till earth and sky and ocean ring
with joy, with justice, love, and praise.

March 22, 2010

As a Christian, I know my focus should be first on God, then on family, with other priorities following. With many demands on my time, I tend to focus on what is in front of me, usually a husband and three little boys. That translates into focusing on family ministry first.

But Christians are called to minister beyond their families. I must also consider the wider world, people beyond the walls of my home and beyond my church. I am called to share the good news of Jesus Christ with others who do not know Him. Talking openly about my faith is difficult for me. Will I say the right words to convey the intended message? Will I sound like a Jesus freak and scare off the listener?

I am prepared to sacrifice my comfort zone and reach out in love to share the blessing that Christ has been in my life. I have experienced the gift of God's saving grace. With one simple invitation to join me in worship, God may initiate a monumentally impactful event in the life of a neighbor, a friend. Why would I not want to share God's message of love?

Dear Lord: Please be with me as I endeavor to share your word with the unchurched in my community. Help me find the right words to share the hope and joy in knowing You. You sacrificed your Son to die that I may have eternal life. The least I can do is try something outside of my comfort zone and invite others to join me in following You. Amen

My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. John 15:12,13

March 23, 2010

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. - Colossians 3:23-34

The older I get (although of course I am still quite young), the more aware I am of how precious time and energy are. We have so many responsibilities – places to go, people to see, things to do – as well as so many interests and only a finite number of hours and amount of energy to do them. I'd like to say this awareness makes me a better steward of these gifts – but sometimes knowing their finiteness makes me stingier, wanting to keep them all for myself, to do what I want to do.

And then I look around MPC and see so many people – deacons, elders, staff and literally hundreds of member/attender volunteers in all kinds of areas of ministry – spending their precious time and energy to serve others and our Lord. Doing big jobs and small, working 'out front' and behind the scenes, stepping outside their comfort zones and forgoing personal endeavors (sometimes including sleep!) for the sake of their brothers and sisters in Christ – and for those who don't yet know Him. That is sacrifice. That is love. And that challenges me, convicts me, humbles me – and changes me.

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March 24, 2010

Last fall I witnessed one of the most excruciating things ever. A man I work with and his wife were in the midst of a struggle to bring healing to their toddler son who was suffering from a very aggressive leukemia. The wife kept a blog on a web site, and time passed as she poured out her hopes, her faith in God, her prayer requests, anecdotes about developmental milestones achieved mostly in the hospital, stories about her son and his burgeoning personality, vignettes about family life and their older son, the triumphal moment when the disease was in remission and they finally went home to be a family under the same roof. And then the disease roared back with vengeance. Still, she kept writing, inviting us into her sorrows and her faith. She shared the exquisite sadness of holding her child as he died in her arms.

N.T Wright wrote, “The glory of Christ is not revealed in spectacular show of success, in people who get everything right all the time... The church reveals the glory of Christ through suffering and shame as much as through what the world counts as success. The way this happens is, often enough, that the church is called to be where the world is in pain, at the place where the world is suffering and in a state of shame and sorrow. The church is there as the presence of the suffering Christ in the world.

Rachel’s sacrifice was how she let us into her life. She modeled how to trust God in horrible circumstances; she brought Jesus to those around her. I am privileged to have been taught by her and to have seen Christ’s glory reflected in her life .

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March 25, 2010

We knew this was going to be a different Christmas, but we couldn't possibly have imagined what was ahead of us. We traveled to San Jose to be with Ted's parents while his dad had lung surgery. Kristin was 2 months old and our son Erik was 2 yrs. old. During his hospital stay, Ted's dad was diagnosed with lung cancer. We were just about to take the kids to wave to him outside of his hospital room window when Erik had a horrific accident. He ended up in the same hospital. God was watching over him, and he survived. But, at the time, we were frightened for our child, upset about Ted's dad and concerned for his mom. We called our friends in married students' housing, to tell them what was going on.

A few days after Ted's dad and Erik came home from the hospital, we set out for home. It was just 2 or 3 days before Christmas.

I don't know who saw the Christmas tree first, but it was amazing. Our friends had pooled their resources to buy a tree and presents for our children. Christmas cookies were waiting on the kitchen counter, along with an invitation to Christmas dinner.

We knew that these fellow students had to give up some of their Christmas to provide for ours. Their love and sacrifice were such wonderful gifts.

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March 26, 2010

Fern, my mother-in-law, is truly gracious. Of any adult in my life beside my husband, James, she is the one who has modeled most clearly the self-giving nature of love. Beyond the selfless love she extends toward her family, I am often astounded at her caring interactions with complete strangers.

Last year, while Fern was having some repair work done on her home, she noticed one of the hired day laborers looking at the books in her bookshelf, his head tilted to one side as he looked at the titles. After a bit of struggle on both sides past the language barrier, they discovered they shared a mutual love of education and learning in general, and of books in particular. Fern asked if he was currently reading a book, and he replied that his books had been left at home in Mexico for his children. Fern replied that he might have one book from her shelves if he would tell her why he chose it. He chose her dictionary, so that he could learn more about the English language and American culture, and then send it home to his kids so they could learn, too. What a lovely meeting of like minds!

Fern sees people as persons - not as their jobs, or their roles, or as the function they play in her life – and she has a genuine love for people that reminds me of Jesus. Open-minded and willing to talk with anybody, they both see people right where they are and love them just for being people – and God's children. What a gift to the rest of us!

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March 27, 2010

2009 has been quite a year in the Colvin household. I began my year fervently asking God how I could serve Him. I had been feeling that I wasn't using my Spiritual Gifts efficiently, and waited for His Answer.

Between John taking a pay-cut, me finding out I was pregnant, Sarah graduating from Moorpark College, and preparing to go to WA State for her junior year in college, morning sickness 19 weeks of my pregnancy, my baby sister getting breast cancer, Emma starting Kindergarten, and then having my precious baby, Taylor...whew...I was exhausted.

Throughout all of this, I had angels who would call me to tell me they were bringing my family dinners, or they took Noah and Emma out for a while. These were unsolicited offers of pure love, and I am so grateful to each of my Sisters in Christ.

The greatest gift I learned in 2009 was that I was the recipient of someone else's gifts being bestowed upon me. God allowed me and my family to be loved in the most tangible ways. I am a witness of my church family and how incredibly blessed we all are to have each other.

Know that you are loved, too. You are prayed for each week in a prayer group. Your deacons love you and care for you. Your Elders oversee the life of this wonderful church.

I am only one small example of what God is doing in our lives. He is so Awesome, and He uses each of us in surprising ways.

I challenge you to pray how God can use you. He made it very clear to me who I am, what I am supposed to do, and showed me how to be cared for. Humbling, wonderful, joyous, alive love of God...Thank You, Jesus, for being THE example of Love!

My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. John 15:12,13

Sixth Sunday in Lent: March 28, 2010

Easter Portion Handel's Messiah

For the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth.
Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

The kingdom of this world is become
the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and of His Christ;
and He shall reign forever and ever

King of Kings,
forever and ever. Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
And Lord of Lords,
forever and ever. Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

King of Kings, and Lord of Lords,
and He shall reign forever and ever
and He shall reign forever and ever

King of Kings
forever and ever. Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

And He shall reign forever and ever,
forever and ever,
King of Kings,
and Lord of Lords,
King of Kings,
and Lord of Lords,
and He shall reign forever and ever,

King of Kings,
and Lord of Lords.
Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

March 29, 2010

“Laugh with our happy friends when they’re happy; share tears when they’re down.”

Romans 12:15

I got a phone call from one of my daughters’ friends who asked if she could come over and talk with us. I don’t usually see her much, as she is now a young adult with a career, and my daughter is living in Arizona. She sounded concerned and I was hoping she was okay. She lost her dad to cancer three years ago, and the grief process had its share of ups and downs. We were happy to be a friend to her during those times.

She arrived with tears in her eyes. We sat down, and she told us that our daughter’s high school boyfriend had passed away the night before. The news was shocking and unexpected. He was a fine young man, from a wonderful family. He was a star athlete, an Eagle Scout, went to college, and had a career started. He had recently been in a car accident and had become addicted to pain pills. He went to his parents and asked to be put in a rehab facility. His mom is a nurse and researched the best place for him to go. They had just dropped him off at rehab and said goodnight; not knowing that he would die of cardiac arrest that night.

My daughter’s friend was acquainted with grief and suffering, having recently lost her father. She knew that her news was best shared in person. Her presence was one of wise compassion and caring. It was a reflection of Christ’s presence in her life. She knew from her own grief that being together was important. Weeping with those who weep is a sacrificial gift we can give, to share Christ’s love with others.

My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. John 15:12,13

March 30, 2010

My mother is a strong Christian and saw to it that my brothers and I were raised in the church. My father is a wonderful man, but to this day has yet to profess his love for God and his need for Jesus as his Savior. He supported my mother in her efforts to get us to church, but he never went – except for the traditional holidays of Christmas and Easter.

During college I became a youth director for a church in Thousand Oaks. One of my duties was to lead the congregation in worship a couple of times during the year with the youth group. For my very first youth service I made sure to invite my mother and my grandmother, as well as my roommates and other friends from college. I “mentioned” the youth service to my father and resigned myself to the fact that he would never make the drive from Orange County on a Sunday morning to come and see me at work in the church.

I was extremely nervous that morning, preparing to take the congregation through worship at the age of 19. The kids were nervous too, waving and smiling at their parents. I knew my “invited” guests would be attending the second service. But to my surprise, as I looked out at the crowd gathering for first service, I saw my father sitting in the back row. He saw me and smiled.

Even though my father was not a Christian, this was one of the biggest examples of selfless love I had ever witnessed. Even though church was not his “thing”, he would not miss seeing his son in action. God tells us to plant the seed and to depend on him to do the rest. I am confident that my dad and I will live in heaven together.

My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. John 15:12,13

March 31, 2010

I was 16 and attending my fourth high school, having been unceremoniously removed, for various transgressions, from the other three. I was an angry young man, with little direction or motivation, who by any reasonable standard, deserved little, if any, compassion or forgiveness. My family life was strained through my own doing. Respect for my parents was nonexistent. Most conversations were battles and ended with me leaving the house screaming a flurry of expletives, vowing to never again return. I was the cause of a great deal of pain for both my family and me.

And now I found myself in the principal's office, sitting impatiently with my parents while this administrator was recommending I be turned over to the California Youth Authority, it being merely a pipeline to my apparent lifelong destiny in "the system". I was about to be shuttled off to a life of hopelessness, danger and despair.

Then a funny thing happened. Despite my despicable and unforgivable behavior over a lengthy period, despite all the pain and tears that had been shed over their disturbed and misguided son, my parents, with some reservations, said No! No, he will not fall through the cracks. No, he will stay in regular school. Yes, despite his many issues and shortcomings and all the stress and pain he has inflicted on us all...we will not allow him to be sent down a path which by all indications will end tragically, as it has for so many before and since.

So, though I was undeserving, I was given a gift. The gift often reserved only for a child from their father and mother. The chance for redemption, granted through unconditional love. The same love Christ has for us.

My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. John 15:12,13

April 1, 2010

It's a popular theme in children's stories. For Stuart Little, an animated mouse, it is an "empty space". After Shel Silverstein lifted pen from paper, what emerged was the "missing piece". We've all been there. Felt it. In an attempt to camouflage the feeling, we take on challenges from the secular world. When I was younger, the typical challenge manifested itself in the form of a new video game (OK, it still does). It has now become 'grown up' concepts such as operating income or unit cost. Again and again, we tackle activities that are an enigma to us. Then, an all too familiar pattern emerges. Frustration... ideas... awakening... mastery... boredom. Our capabilities grow, yet at the end, a knowing 'tug' from within... questioning. Is this all there is?

Enter the Word. For each of us, it is different. How will revelation come upon me? How will I hear the still, small voice? The avenues are varied: working with a ministry team, Biblical study through commentaries, engaging the Word through a small group. Draw me nearer, Lord. Then, with a "snick", God slides home the missing piece in our hearts. He smiles... with that inkling of purpose, that wisp of faith, he awakens in us knowledge that there is meaning to our lives. Though life's storms continue, there is comfort in knowing that He awaits us. "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him".

My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. John 15:12,13

April 2, 2010

Nancy Reagan called Alzheimer's "the long good-bye". My dad, Brennan Batstone, had his own description for it – "a horrible disease". For about ten years, he had watched while it relentlessly erased Mom's memory.

While growing up, I wouldn't have described Dad as a compassionate person. Generally, his feelings lay hidden, but when he became my mom's caregiver, compassion and tenderness broke through the surface. Tears broke through too - quietly and unobtrusively.

I don't think I will ever know the full extent of the sacrifice Dad made. The "golden years" were robbed from him. The woman to whom he had devoted his life couldn't share the memories of that life with him. Yet Dad was faithfully there for her. Even when they could no longer live together, he ensured, no matter what the cost, that she got the care she needed. He also regularly visited her, greeted her with a kiss, always held her hand, and did not hesitate to say, "I love you". Dad took his marriage vows seriously: "for better, for worse, in sickness and in health, till death...."

One of Dad's favorite hymns says this:

*"Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come,
Let this blessed assurance control,
That Christ hath regarded my helpless estate,
And has shed his own blood for my soul."*

This is the belief that saw Dad through the hard lessons of Alzheimer's. Christ was (and still is) his example, his Savior, and his Lord. May He be ours as well.

My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. John 15:12,13

April 3, 2010

This is something awful to admit. Sometimes when I hunger or thirst for guidance or strengthening from God's word, I reread an old familiar passage. Instead of embracing it like a dearly beloved and comfortable friend, I thumb through it and skip it with a "yah yah, I know this" attitude or let out a dismissive sigh. Forgetting for the moment how special and amazing it is that these words have been preserved by our heavenly Father, I run the risk of missing out on what revelation God would bless me with during each encounter with His Word.

This is the day the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it. Psalm 118:24

This day *is* a gift from God. This day *is* the only time to live it. This day *is* to honor the Father in Heaven. This day *is* to pray for loved ones, or even those who are unlovable. This day *is* to love others deeply from the heart. This day *is* to trust and obey the God who created it. This day *is* to be thankful for each of the people and circumstances God places on the path He directs. This day *is* to enrich by spending time in Scripture. This day *is* to sing hymns and praises. This day *is* to serve our Lord and Savior in little and big ways to demonstrate His love!

My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. John 15:12,13

Easter: April 4, 2010

In these Lenten devotionals we have talked about how we have experienced risk taking and self-giving love.

I sure never saw that in Junior High School. Kids there were desperate to avoid risk, so they played the “Who’s Going to Say it First?” game. If someone wanted to get together with someone as a boyfriend or girlfriend, they first sent emissaries to ask, “Do you like so-and-so?” It was an elaborate dance. Sometimes one person’s emissaries negotiated with emissaries from the other side. But before kids in my Junior High could say, “You’re cool.” they needed to be absolutely sure the other person would say it back.

God isn’t in Junior High. He said “I love you” first. God has said it in a thousand ways. He created you. He’s taken care of you. He died for you. He rose from the dead as proof that you have been set free from what enslaves you. Even when you didn’t know it, God was showing love to you. God has said over to you, “I love you.”

God has taken the risk. He has reached out to us. And now, this Easter morning, He waits to hear what we will say.

My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. John 15:12,13

Contributors

Pam Lopez	17-Feb	Sheri Alikpala	13-Mar
Nanci Van Vorst	18-Feb	Hymn: Jesus Lives and So Shall I	14-Mar
Keri Crane	19-Feb	Mark & Ute Van Dam	15-Mar
Janet Loughry	20-Feb	Sheri Hilmer	16-Mar
Hymn: Because He Lives	21-Feb	Ted Dahl	17-Mar
Bonnie Boe	22-Feb	Tom Flitsch	18-Mar
Brad Fredrickson	23-Feb	Wayne Tingley	19-Mar
Curt Leddy	24-Feb	Janet Loughry	20-Mar
Frankie Giffin	25-Feb	Hymn: Christ is Alive	21-Mar
Sonja Varnum	26-Feb	Molly Luebbert	22-Mar
Dan Luebbert	27-Feb	Joan Johnson	23-Mar
Hymn: Thine is the Glory	28-Feb	Janet Fredrickson	24-Mar
Dave Wilkinson	1-Mar	Linda Dahl	25-Mar
Denise Piehn	2-Mar	Loris Mitchell	26-Mar
Gene Giffin	3-Mar	Michelle Colvin	27-Mar
Tony Lopez	4-Mar	Easter Portion of Handel's Messiah	28-Mar
Launa Thompson	5-Mar	Carolin Migliazzo	29-Mar
Ralph DeVane	6-Mar	Dean May	30-Mar
Hymn: He Lives	7-Mar	Dan Crane	31-Mar
John Colvin	8-Mar	Dan Luebbert	1-Apr
Kara Ayers	9-Mar	Steve Batstone	2-Apr
Kelly Ghaffary	10-Mar	Nanci Van Vorst	3-Apr
Laurie Loring	11-Mar	Dave Wilkinson	4-Apr
Marion Buxton	12-Mar		