



Who is God When Life Stinks?

Hope...and Faith

This is my fifth effort at writing this chapter. How do I summarize the events and emotions that accompany a tragedy such as my brother-in-law's sudden death? Where do we find HOPE when all seemed so sad and senseless? How does anyone move from such intense, stabbing loss to face another day?

As Martha's sister, I agonized for her loss. God's presence had been so real to me in each crisis with Bob, as the frightful presence of death lurked daily in the corner of his room. Minute-by-minute, God's powerful hand had held back Death from taking my man. Why, I grieved, did God not choose to send Death away from Martha's man also??!

How could I move past this invading sense of hopelessness with the death of our precious Dave?

I can't...not fully... until I wrestle with the truth that life reaches farther than just our days on this earth. The truth that there are things "not yet known" entices us to stretch out in faith for something that goes beyond our flesh-and-blood world. Perhaps, instead of focusing only on the obvious, catastrophic consequences of Dave's death, we needed to focus on what "faith sees".

"Now FAITH is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for..." Hebrews 11:1

Martha was an amazing example of having the "eyes of faith". She wrote down her heartache and her convictions—in her journal just days after Dave's funeral. Listen in...

Trust God:

August 9, 2007

"When the Lord called David home I was 2,000 miles away from him and from my children. I had flown east to spend six days with my five sisters. It had been two years since we had seen each other and we decided we needed to be together while we were still able. Our visiting had lasted for less than 24 hours when I got a call from David. I was on the phone with him when God took him home with a "heart attack."

God knew I needed my sisters that day. My sister Sue's house where we all were staying got little

to no cell phone reception but that morning not only did I receive David's call but all five of my sisters cell phones from around the country were working. They made phone calls to family, friends and neighbors; they prayed with me and cried with me. Ruth, whose husband was in the hospital and Janna, who was to leave for a mission term in the Dominican Republic stayed back at the house while Sue drove me to the airport with Beth and Lois in the car. Once at the airport God provided seats for Beth and me on a direct flight to Denver, a flight that had previously been over booked.

Flying has never been a favorite pastime for me but this flight was worse than I had ever imagined. It was just hours after David's passing, and my mind was flooded with wonderful memories of the husband who had grown so dear to me. I kept asking God, "Why would you take such a Godly husband and father? How will I ever live without him?" I asked Beth to read Psalms to me to remind me of God's promises to me.

I was crying out to the Lord when I heard a voice from above say, "Do you trust Me? Do you trust Me? Do you trust Me?" Three times these words echoed in my spirit. I can think of no earthly good that can come from God calling my man home long before his time on earth should be over. In these words God was not asking me to understand why but to trust Him. God chose to take my husband into eternity and I must decide whether to trust Him or not. I determined that since I trusted God while David was here with me, I must continue to trust Him in his absence.

Many years ago I chose Proverbs 3:5-6 as my life verses. They say;

**Trust in the LORD with all your heart
And do not lean on your own understanding.
In all your ways acknowledge Him,
And He will make your paths straight.**

I don't understand why God would allow my husband to be taken from me when I still need him so desperately, but I will continue to trust the Lord with all my heart. He has proven Himself faithful to me and to my family. We will choose to trust Him even though we don't understand.

David and I were more deeply in love than ever, after 28 years of marriage. Some marriages get old and tired but not ours. Spending time together was a priority. Many years ago we trusted God with our family planning. We found Him to be trustworthy

in both giving us our nine children and then providing the means to care for and nurture these precious rewards. In spite of all the distractions that go with raising a big family, God enabled David and me to cultivate a deep and precious friendship, more beautiful than we ever thought possible.

God was able to grow our marriage and family supernaturally and in doing so has proven His trustworthiness to me. Now I choose to surrender my future into His hands to redeem my loss for His glory. As I acknowledge the trustworthiness and faithfulness He has shown me in the past, He can direct my steps through the rest of my life to make them straight, directed toward the goals He has for my family and me.”

Martha stood and spoke at her husband’s funeral, telling friends and family of her trust in God, even when she didn’t understand his ways. As she read aloud these verses from Proverbs 3, she was a true example of FAITH. Not certain of the future, but being certain of WHO holds the future. The pastor ended the funeral service by asking if there were any guests there that day who had never put their faith in Christ, as Martha and Dave had done. It was a touch of joy to Martha (and probably to Dave in heaven) to watch as a number of their friends reached out to embrace faith in Christ for the first time.

Martha would hurt, for many days and many nights. She will never get over the loss of a husband that she loved deeply. Yet she chose to surrender to FAITH—and found the unexplainable HOPE that resides there.

**“For our dying bodies must be transformed into bodies that will never die;
our mortal bodies must be transformed into immortal bodies.
Then, when our dying bodies have been transformed into bodies that will never die,
this Scripture will be fulfilled: “Death is swallowed up in victory”
I Corinthians 15:53, 54**

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