

8/28/18

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The World War II *Saving Private Ryan* is about a small unit of soldiers with a difficult assignment. They had orders to penetrate enemy country, find one, specific soldier, Private James Ryan, bring him out and send him home. The government issued those orders because it had just notified Ryan's mother that her 3 other sons died in battle.

The leader of this small unit is Captain John Miller. Captain Miller is tough, fair, respected. He's also a bit of a mystery to his men. Try as they might, they can never get Captain Miller to tell them what he did before the war. It's become something of a friendly contest among the men to find out.

Which brings us to one of the most poignant scenes in the movie. In searching for Private Ryan in enemy territory, one of the men gets killed. The men in the unit begin to fall apart. They begin to wonder why they are there, why they are risking their lives to find one man. They are on the edge of mutiny. It's at that moment that Captain Miller chooses to tell them what he did before the war. "You know what I did for a living?" he gently asks. "I'll tell you. I was an English teacher at Thomas Alva Edison High School in Addley, PA." Then he adds this. "My wife is there. I love her very much. And the way I see it, if carrying out this mission gets me closer to seeing her again, well, that's what I'm going to do." With that, Captain Miller picks up his gun and moves out. And without saying a word, the rest of his men follow.

By God's grace, few of us have ever had to face the horror and stress of war. Nevertheless, in our lives there are those moments when all the comforts and joys of

life seem to vanish with the arrival of something awful. Perhaps your finances have collapsed. Perhaps you feel trapped in the misery of cancer treatment. Perhaps a member of your family has shattered your heart.

At those moments when it seems as though there are only terrible things for you to endure, what sustains you? What gets you through? What sustained Captain Miller was the possibility of getting home to his wife. What sustains you and me is the reality of going home to heaven.

They were looking for a better country—a heavenly one. Hebrews 11:16

Even in a broken world there is almost always a wide variety of comforts and joys to sustain us. But at those moments when there isn't, remember: Jesus died for your sins. He lives. Your home in heaven waits. And between now and then, your Savior will get you through.

Prayer: *Lord Jesus, in those moments when all seems dark, carry me. I rest myself in you. Amen.*

(WELS E-Devotion, adapted)

...See you in worship.

Keep looking up because the Lord is always looking down – Psalm 121

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