

05-29-19 Wednesday Musing

Greetings! I hope everyone had a pleasant Memorial Day weekend... and in mentioning "memorial"... that is exactly what's been on my mind lately... and all that goes with the thought of 'memorial' ... death... of course... but also loss... shock... uncertainty... confusion... loneliness... anxiety concerning change... perhaps even anger... or resentment... guilt.... A day set aside to remember a lost loved one often comes with many... many feelings being brought back to the surface of our minds... be it Memorial Day... a birthday... or the anniversary of their death. There are other things that trigger our memories of those that have gone on before us as well. It's been 31 years since I lost my Dad to cancer and 54 years ago my brother passed away after a tragic accident at almost 3 years old, ... and still... there are instances that bring an unsettled feeling to the surface. Life is never the same after a loss of someone we care for deeply... My memories of them are sparked by events... scents... a phrase someone uses... or their absence at a significant moment in time... But basically, I try to hang on to the knowledge that one day we will be reunited...

Grief is part of life... everyone and everything that lives is going to die sometime... I'm reading a book right now as a part of a "Book Study" that Rev. Rea (pastor at Bethel UMC) is leading. "A Resurrection Shaped Life" by Jake Owensby... it's a great book, which I recommend if you're looking for something new to read... In it, Owensby says *"Grief is human. It comes with loving in a world where everything passes away. Sorrow provides an important key to understanding the place of hope in our day-to-day lives. Christianity is about a real God responding to real human life in ways that only God can. We cannot will sorrow away; it is a part of the human condition. When we love, the beloved is woven into the fabric of our lives. A loved one's death painfully tears that fabric. God promises to vindicate our love, not by anesthetizing us, but by bringing greater life from the depths of our sorrow. We don't merely get over the death of a loved one as if it were water under the bridge. Even if we anticipate a reunion with someone beyond death's veil, we bear our sense of loss with an ever-deeper sense of Christ's life-giving love in our daily lives."*

So again I say... grief is a part of life... somewhere ... sometime... you are going to grieve... and probably already have gone through grief from the loss of someone dear... it's just the way we're built... but grief is not a place one is suppose to live... it's a road to travel upon to get to somewhere else... it's not a road that you are suppose to walk all by yourself... Christ will walk with you every step of the way... and not only will He walk with you but He'll bring friends and fellow Christians in from time to time to assist you as you walk this road... at your own pace... in your own time. But He does not want you to bring along a tent and set up camp somewhere...

Scripture speaks to all of the above listed feelings or emotions... perhaps the most remembered verse is from the 23 Psalm... **"4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me."** And in 2 Corinthians 4 we find **"17 For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, 18 as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal."** ... and concerning our anxiety about the changes associated with living life... one of my favorite go-to's is from Philipians 4:6

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6 do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God"

God responds to our suffering... He joins us in it... He transforms us through it... if we will reach out and take the hand that Christ is offering us... that nail scarred hand that knows what pain feels like... because he's felt it... one of His greatest pleasures is the moment you grab His hand and let Him embrace you in all of your brokenness and sorrow... He doesn't want you to stay there... He wants to lead you out to the other side... to the lush mountain sides and clear crisp babbling brooks... let Him... You'll never regret it!

As we lift our hearts and minds in prayer this week let us remember all of those who suffer from grief... pray for our soldiers and their families... the missionaries around the globe... our government leaders... our pastors... deacons and elders...

Also let us remember Mary Jane Pettigrew - ARMC Room 116 Family of Pat Sellars, Faye Strickland, Millie Fraser, Frances Morgan, Selma Simpson, Jeanne Williams, Harvey Sharpe, Donna Freeman. Also remember friends: Michael Clark, Nancy Toney, Connie Papadis, Daughter of Evelyn Rey—Carol Mitchell, Family of Barbara Smith, Jeanette Hudson—mother of Connie Collins (room 713 at Peak Resources). Please remember the families as well as the person listed.

The Sermon title this week is "Making the Most of the Journey" . the Scripture will be read from Proverbs 2:1-11 and Matthew 5:14-16.

Happening soon around the church: Sunday, June 2nd is Graduate Recognition Sunday. Tuesday, June 4th the Supper Club will meet at Valerio's on Front Street at 6pm. Then... on Wednesday, June 5th come out to the Bray Hall for a night filled with fun and prizes on Bingo Night.

May God bless you and keep you,
Joan 😊

