

November



Shady Shores Baptist Church

2017

From The Pastor's Heart . . .

At the end of this month, we will celebrate Thanksgiving. Something we have done countless times. But for many, due to the pain of loss of loved ones, loss due to health, loss due to any number of outside things over which we have no control, Thanksgiving can really be a time of pain and anguish. How do I give thanks when my heart is broken? How can I give thanks when I am still grieving? I found the following story. I hope it will help to put Thanksgiving in a different perspective if you are one of the wounded soldiers for Christ.

Learning to Give Thanks When Suffering Loss—Bouquet of Rose Thorns

You must die to live; take up your cross daily in order to follow Christ; give in order to receive; all those who live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. The bitter and the sweet are realities when you put your faith in Christ.

Jennifer's life had been easy, like a spring breeze. She married a man she loved, they lived in a nice home, and then they were going to have a son. But in the 4th month of her pregnancy, a car accident stole her peace. During the following Thanksgiving week she would have delivered a son, but now her arms and heart were empty. She barely made it to the florists to pick up a Thanksgiving flower arrangement for her church.

Thanksgiving? Thankful for what? She wondered. For a careless driver whose truck was hardly scratched when he rear-ended her? For an airbag that saved her life but took the life of her child?

"Good afternoon, can I help you?" The shop clerk startled her. "I...I need an arrangement, stammered Jennifer. "For Thanksgiving? Do you want beautiful, or would you like what I call the Thanksgiving "Special?" asked the shop clerk. "What do you mean?" Jennifer asked. "I'm convinced flowers tell stories," she continued. "Are you looking for something that conveys 'gratitude' this Thanksgiving?" "Not exactly!" Jennifer blurted out. "In the last five months, everything that could go wrong has gone wrong."

The shop clerk said, "I have the perfect arrangement for you." She disappeared into the back and came back out with a large bouquet of roses, only these roses had all of the flowers cut off, leaving only the thorny stems. "What kind of flower arrangement is that? Do you expect me to pay for this?" Jennifer said. "Not unless you decide you want to. But first hear me out. Several years ago I lost my husband, and for the first time in my life, I spent the holidays alone. I had no children, no husband, no family nearby, and too great a debt to allow any travel." "So what did you do?" asked Jennifer. "I learned to be thankful for thorns," answered the clerk quietly. "I've always thanked God for good things in life and never asked Him why those good things happened to me. But when bad stuff hit, boy did I ever ask! It took time for me to learn that dark times are part of God's plan for my life. My experience has shown me that thorns make roses more precious. Remember, it was a crown of thorns that Jesus wore so we might know His love."

Tears rolled down Jennifer's cheeks. For the first time since the accident, she loosened her grip on resentment.

“I’ll take those twelve long-stemmed thorns, please. What do I owe you?” “Nothing but a promise to allow God to heal your heart. The first year’s arrangement is always on me.”

When Jennifer got home she read the card:

“My God, I have never thanked You for my thorns. I have thanked You a thousand times for my roses, but never once for my thorns. Teach me the glory of the cross I bear; teach me the value of my thorns. Show me that I have climbed closer to You along the path of pain. Show me that, through my tears, the colors of Your rainbow shine much more brilliant.”

No pain, no palm; no thorns, no throne; no gall, no glory; no cross, no crown.

—William Penn

I hope and pray that each of you will be thankful this year. For most of you, to be thankful for the bounty of God’s blessings. For the rest of you, I pray that the thorns will remind you of God’s sacrifice, the death of His Son. But in the midst of that, the blessing of the resurrection.

Paul writing to the church at Corinth:

“Behold, I tell you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, ‘DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP in victory. O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR VICTORY? O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR STING?’ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1Corinthians 15:51-57 NAS77).

See you Sunday: Looking Up, Reaching Out, Going Forward.

From My Heart To Yours,



TIME CHANGE
SUNDAY NOVEMBER 05, 2017
Don't forget to change your clocks back one hour.