

Holy Week

“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.”

Psalm 23:4

“Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.”

Matthew 5:4

This was a year of many trials and triumphs. I've chosen these two Scriptures because each has provided its own stamp of comfort on my heart and soul.

My wife, Lisa, lost her father this past year. This was, of course, a most difficult and challenging event. His passing was very sudden and unexpected. It rocked our very core but, eventually, gave us great pause as well. At the funeral, Lisa's eulogy was strong, loving and unwavering. Those who were there to witness Lisa's speech later shared with me, that they "felt Jesus speak through her" and that she was "Jesus with skin on." Well, it was an amazing thing to witness, mostly because, that's exactly what she was doing; she was witnessing to all who attended. The fact that the majority of the attendees were Jewish made her discourse even more powerful.

The Rabbi spoke of Psalm 23:4, a familiar reading at funerals. But this was different, at least for me. He described "the valley of the shadow of death" as being this "LIFE" our normal, simple and not so simple everyday life. Wow! This really got me thinking. I was struck by the comfort I feel daily in my walk with Christ. It was a real "Ah-ha" moment for me.

The second Scripture also speaks of comfort. This was ever present from the outpouring of love we felt from our friends and church family. We were moved to tears so many times by the compassion and commitment people had for us in our time of grief. We were showered with love and comfort and food and friends just simply being there. We experienced it as a tremendous showing of God's love and comfort for us. When Lisa and I reflect on those days, we often wonder how those who are non-believers and not part of such a community would cope with this type of a loss. The fact that God is our family's focus and that Jesus is present in our daily lives has given the greatest comfort we have ever known.

Dear Father, Help us to submit to You and to seek Your will for our lives, rather than our own. Let us trust in Your plan and purpose in times of difficulty. Amen.

Bruce Cole
(Submitted in 2008)

