

RESURRECTION

As I consider writing about the resurrection of Jesus, I grope for words. Reading the gospel accounts, they seem bare, factual, almost anti-climactic. The emotion just isn't there. They leave me feeling like the disciples must have felt – I don't get it. It's real; I know it's happened; I'm surprised and happy, but I don't know what it means. The implications of the event escape me. It is only as I understand the revelations and explanations written later in the epistles that I begin to see the import of the historical event and its implications for me.

I have had two resurrection-like experiences in my life, two losses, deaths, as it were, that were later brought back to life. And even though I lived these, words to explain them still don't come easily. My understanding of them is sketchy at best.

When our infertility doctor told us there was nothing more he could do for us, my dreams of motherhood died. The months of grieving this were dark and scary. I had the distinct sense that if I did not consciously and willfully trust God each and every moment, I would go crazy. I would be lying if I said that suicide never crossed my mind.

But God was faithful to bring me through the darkness, heal the pain, and fill the empty places with Himself. I remember a Sunday worship when someone read Psalm 84, and I knew absolutely that even if I never had any children, my testimony would have to be, "No good thing does He withhold from those who walk uprightly" (v.11), because He had given me so much of Himself.

When I became pregnant some years later, suddenly motherhood was back on the radar screen. I knew it was real; I was surprised and happy, deliriously so, but I still didn't know what it meant. I only knew that it was different. I knew that I was different, that I would not be the same mother I would have been years prior. Even today, after thirty-three years of motherhood, I still marvel at the grace of God in the gift of my children.

My second death and resurrection came with my cancer experience. When the diagnosis came, I struggled mightily to surrender my right to life and health to Him. My faith was tested as never before. Could I really trust Him with my very life? Over the course of the year of treatments, the majority of reports were negative. I struggled more with terror than with chemo, nausea, and baldness combined. At times even the Scriptures were no help. I clung to any shred of hope given, no matter how tenuous. I fought the enemy daily, even hourly, with as much truth as I knew and as much strength as I could muster.

When the treatments were done, I was relieved, if too tired to be happy. I knew it was over, but I still didn't know what it meant. Was the cancer gone for good, gone for now, or not gone at all? The battle for truth over the doubts and fears continued for many months. It is only as I have lived these last twenty years that I have grown in the realization that my life and health have, indeed, been given back to me. I am not the same person I would have been twenty years later minus the cancer. I am alive in ways I never imagined before cancer. I have a fervency of devotion that I would not have believed possible.

I have realized the truth of I Cor. 15: 36-37 and 42-44. "That which you sow does not come to life unless it dies; and that which you sow, you do not sow the body which is to be, but a bare grain, perhaps of wheat or of something else . . . So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a perishable body, it is raised an imperishable body; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body."

My former dreams of motherhood were natural dreams, weak, fleshly, and perishable. The real motherhood that God desired to give me is truly glorious and eminently worthy of the loss required to gain it. Likewise my earlier dreams and aspirations for my life have been swallowed up and rendered nothing in comparison to the life I live now.

My gratitude overflows to the God who has been so faithful to bring back from the dead the things He called me to surrender. If I may be so bold, every act of dying to self will have its resurrection, if not in the here and now, then in eternity. Would that I could remember that as well in the trivial things of life as in the huge things. When once we experience resurrection, how can we still cling to our selfish ways, knowing that we deny ourselves that imperishable, glorious, powerful, spiritual life that can only come when we let go of the perishable, weak, and natural?

In the end, I find that I cannot and don't want to try to explain Jesus' resurrection. I only want to worship.

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