

Matters of Life and Death Belong to the Lord

Little Daisy was a flop eared chocolate lab who never quite grew into her paws. She was my girl, just a big goofy puppy really; affectionate, innocent, and so eager to learn. She just wiggled with such joy that loving her came natural. Effortlessly she placed her trust in me, though I couldn't understand why.

Honestly, up until I got Daisy I'd never treated animals very good. I'd vowed this time would be different. After all, my wife and I would be planning a family soon and I so deeply longed to become a better man. I intended to take this opportunity to prepare myself to be a good dad. That's why I was just so devastated the day 6 months later when I buried Daisy beside the 61 hwy.

I had come down from the city to spend some time at my grandparent's house. Little Daisy was almost grown now and she was enjoying the farm almost as much as I was enjoying the vittles. She quickly took up with my grandpa's hound and they ran like there was no tomorrow. Daisy was really stretching out those gangly legs for the first time. She danced about like she'd reached the Promised Land; dropping that Frisbee at my feet time after time. She was so excited I could hardly get her to work with the real training dummy. But hey, I was growing up too, and wisely decided now was not the time to sweat her about it.

Before hitting the sack that night I made sure to pen Daisy up proper. My grandpa had lost many dogs on that fast moving highway. I didn't intend for that to happen. That's why I was so surprised the next morning when he woke me up at the crack of dawn with the news.

My heart raced, I slipped on my clothes and ran to her pen. Sure enough it was empty. A hole had been burrowed through the wire. Papa pointed towards the highway. Looking out, I saw what I feared was her form about fifty yards down, heaped up out in the middle of the road. I wanted to run to her, but on the same hand, I didn't want it to be her. It was a long walk, cars streaming by honking at me and swerving to miss her.

What I came upon out there is hardly fitting to speak about, and surely not how I want to remember little Daisy. This can be such a brutal world.

Papa brought me a shovel and I buried her just off the highway near the railroad tracks. He went back to the house, and for that I am glad, because I didn't take it well. I didn't take it well at all. I didn't want anyone to see me this way, and I wanted some space to grieve as I dug her grave.

Maybe you're saying, "It's just a dog." You are right. But as I looked at what used to be my innocent trusting little Daisy laying there, I couldn't help but feel like I'd failed her. I just broke down, and I am struggling not to do so even now as I write this.

But anyway- Odds are, there are many of you out there experiencing grief or regret that ventures well out beyond my realm of understanding. I realize most times a stranger's sentiments can sound puny in the face of such pain, nonetheless, I hope you will allow me to humbly share with you a phrase I got in a dream the other night. "Matters of life and death belong to the Lord." I woke up the next morning repeating it, and great peace came over me.

As I meditated on the enormity of that thought, it became so clear that our total dependence must be on the Lord Jesus, at least if we are to get out of this life with any shred of sanity. We must put our complete trust in the Author of our faith, and be still and know He alone can bring us to the finish.

We may never understand all the reasons why, but we can trust in the One who does. (*And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.* **Romans 8:28** KJV) Truly, the only way to get through the valley of all this fallen world dishes out is to know, "Thou art with me."

Jesus loves you. I reckon He and the Father know more than their fair share about suffering. If you are struggling with a heavy load, why don't you begin the process of transferring that tremendous weight over unto some shoulders that can bear it. Jesus said- (*Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.* **Matthew 11:28** KJV) May the God of all comfort will be with you.

-Guy Sheffield 8-17-06