

Our Faith is the Victory that Overcomes

A choir of colorful birds fluttered about in the treetops along the country road, merrily announcing their approval of the new spring. Tiny brown sparrows rooted about in the underlying leaves in hopes of a breakfast morsel. The occasional growl of a dual exhaust, coupled with the perpetual cascade of whining tires nearby simply join the symphony; no different than the gentle rustle of the wind through the trees, or the incessant chatter of young red squirrels who frolicked about exulting in the morning sun. No, there was not a care in the world along this stretch. Not today; nary a thought for the morrow, for on a morning such as this the complexities of this world could wait, and rightly so. It was a time for laughter. It was a moment full of promise. At least it should've been.

Without warning the harmony was broken by a terrible screech, then a savage clap of crunching metal. Again and again it punctuated the startled day until a car finally rolled to a rest in a smoldering heap, leaving a trail of shattered glass and passengers strewn in its wake.

In scant more than a twinkling of an eye, five young people had been ejected from all normality. A deafening silence now clamped down upon the morning. Not a stir, not even a gasp. Somewhere an angel winced.

Over the next few hours, frantic family members converged upon an emergency trauma center in downtown Memphis. Here the streets seemed cold, the wail of the sirens, accepted. People hurried about within, talking in low murmurs, conscience of the tender sobs echoing down the dank halls. The families struggled for information. When it finally came it seeped in like a dark cloud. One precious life had been cut short. Three others were in the critical care ward, and only one had miraculously escaped serious injury.

Meanwhile, the cell phone towers were at full tilt as prayer channels were activated across the country. News spread like wild fire. Faithful folks everywhere took a moment to bow, or fall to their knees in response. Our Church did in particular. You see, a couple of the kids in the car were part of our Church family. Their parents, Tony and Denise, are two of my very best friends.

After the release of their sixteen year old Erica, Tony and Denise turned their full attention to their twenty year old son Daniel. He was still in a coma, suffering severe head trauma. As his brain continued to swell his chances didn't look good. Surgery was soon the only option to relieve the pressure. Tony and Denise continued to stand in faith. The prayer warriors behind them only grew more vigilant.

By the grace of God, Daniel made it through one long day after another; each almost a surprise. Oh what a victory it was when his color finally returned and the swelling subsided! However, a terrible prognosis still loomed. It was said if he ever came to he would likely never be able to even feed himself.

The Bible says to every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven. I've personally never ascended to such heights I could even begin to understand why oft times our laughter is so rudely ripped from our midst. Is it even ours to wonder why? Maybe sometimes things just collide in this fallen world, especially with the devil still running wild. I don't know. I do know I refuse to be like the devil and blame everything on God, not when the only rest my burdened soul has ever found was in the arms of my dear Savior.

When the storms of life come Jesus is the only one who can ever truly comfort us. For we know He's been there, drinking from the cup of our bitterness long before it was allowed to reach our lips; our travail passing before Him long before it formed within us. Jesus stepped down from Heaven so he could identify with our suffering first hand; even climbing a hill called Calvary to get a better view. He became a Man of sorrows, acquainted with grief. Yes, our God knows what it's like to lose a child. Now, we can be sure our children are never more 'found' than when He holds them in His arms.

Jesus warned we'd encounter the fires of tribulation as long as we walk this big mound of dirt called earth. But when we look to Him we will find the strength to make it through. In Him, we find a friend in the flames, a hand to hold that will lead us to the victory which transcends this brief journey. Take heart. For the children of God have a day of rest coming. Today, however, we must continue to fight the good fight of faith. *(For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. 1 John 5:4 KJV)*

But anyway- Daniel not only came out that coma, he went on to stun the nurses at his rehab facility by being the first one to ever walk out under their own power after only a month. I hear he's already helping coach a local baseball team this summer! In fact, he told me that himself while helping us unload our band equipment at the nursing home last weekend. Hang in there folks. If even those little brown sparrows hold a tender place in God's heart, how much more do we?

-Guy Sheffield 6-15-07