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THE HERALD

Newsletter of the Orrville Grace Brethren Church

Grieving with Hope

By: Troy Keaton
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My wife Janel died this week. It was awful to say goodbye to her here on earth and to watch her take her final breath. Nothing can prepare you for that, and we are still reeling from our loss.

I have entered the school of grief. I look forward to learning from the great Christian resources on this subject. I am not a grief expert but would be better described as a preschooler nervous about their first day.

But I've already learned something that I wanted to share with you today.

As I was laying in bed Friday night and wrestling with all that has taken place and the reality of Janel's absence, I was praying and seeking the Lord. In those moments the Holy Spirit giving brought a scripture to mind as I thought about the days ahead. I share it because I need to publicly state my intentions in these moments and to

encourage us all as we face adversity in our life.

Paul said in I Thessalonians 4 that as believers we should not "*grieve as others do who have no hope.*" As I lay there broken over the earthly absence of my bride, I was reminded of the Lord's call to me: to commit to "grieving with hope" during this unbelievably sad season in our life.

What does that mean? I think that it means at least these 5 simple things.

BY GOD'S GRACE

I will weep. Paul said we do actually grieve. We just don't grieve like one who has never trusted in Christ. But we weep as did Paul, as did Jesus mother, as did Mary at the tomb of our Lord, as Jesus Himself wept at Lazarus death. Janel's absence is so poignant in my life. The sense of her loss is so painful, I won't hold back the tears, tamp the unexpected emotion nor deny the reality of my loss. I am weeping and will continue to grieve.

BY GOD'S GRACE

I will worship. Everyday I must realign my perspective by focusing on the character, the nature, the work and the promises of God. Through scripture and prayer I must worship in the midst of my weeping. God is still good. His promises are still true. His Holy Spirit still guides and His mercies are still new every morning. So in the midst of loss I will continue to look up and worship the Lord.

BY GOD'S GRACE

I will be grateful. While the future looks sad to me right now and I feel her absence everywhere I turn, I must refuse to get angry or bitter about what I have lost. Instead, I must spend considerable time every day expressing thanksgiving to God for all that He gave me in her life and companionship. I often told Janel in the past couple of years, that our 34 years together were equal to most people's 60 years of marriage. I will give thanks to God everyday for the blessings in my life that He has given.

BY GOD'S GRACE

I will be faithful. I will remain true to all that God has called me to as a Christian, as a father, a grandfather

and as a pastor. I will not allow my pain to be an excuse for the indulgence of attitudes, behaviors or habits of the flesh that could dampen the Spirit's work in me. While devastated, I cannot give in to self-pity or allow Satan to use this pain to harm the work of God in and through me.

BY GOD'S GRACE

I will anticipate. Believers live with hope. I will look forward to how God is going to use this pain in my life to do something good. I will anticipate the sanctification of this suffering for the glory of God. I will be excited about being back in the pulpit and the day to day ministry in the not too distant future. I will expect God to use this to deepen my intimacy with Him and help me better fulfill the calling He has on my life. And I will look forward to that glorious day that awaits us all when "*we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.*" I will see Janel again and by God's grace, I will live the rest of my life on earth with Heaven always in view.

BE ENCOURAGED, WE'RE
CHRISTIANS!

Wherein Is Your Refuge?

By: Thomas Hochstetter

Cease striving and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.

Psalm 46:10

We are in a war, a raging battle fought against our souls! Day in and day out we are bombarded with lies, temptations, disappointments, and the seemingly arbitrary hardships of life. We then are faced with the issue of where we seek refuge.

It is encouraging to learn that David knew about this battle against his soul. He was often attacked from his enemies and had to deal with his own sinful choices. And yet, we observe throughout the entire Psalter that he always found his fortress and present peace in the One who is mightier than anything in all creation!

You see, in our Western world, we are tempted to make quick fixes our

refuge. Whether it be the fleeting rush of materialism, the bittersweet allure of immoral thoughts and deeds, or the cul-de-sac of self-pity, there is a plethora of alternative fortresses for you to try and hide in.

But none will give peace. None will hold firm. None will last. None but this one: “Be still, and know that I am God.” David calls all people to lay down their weapons, to stop attacking and blaming God, to stop worrying about things outside of their reach. And instead to know the One who “makes wars to ease to the end of the earth” (Ps. 46:9).

Where do you hide when you are being attacked? What brings you peace and satisfaction? What is your sure escape?

Be still. Know that God is God! It is not what you feel or perceive at the moment. It is about knowing. Know God! Make Him your sure refuge!

Page 295 in Declaring His Glory among the Nations Daily Scripture Meditations from Pastors Around the World

FUNNIES

Humor For Lexophiles (Lovers of Words):

- I wondered why the baseball was getting bigger. Then it hit me.
- Police were called to a daycare where a three-year-old was resisting a rest.
- Did you hear about the guy whose whole left side was cut off? He's all right now.
- The roundest knight at King Arthur's round table was Sir Circumference.
- The butcher backed up into the meat grinder and got a little behind in his work.
- To write with a broken pencil is pointless.
- When fish are in schools they sometimes take de...bate.
- The short fortune teller who escaped from prison was a small medium at large.
- A thief who stole a calendar got twelve months.
- A thief fell and broke his leg in wet cement. He became a hardened criminal.
- Thieves who steal corn from a garden could be charged with stalking.

- We'll never run out of math teachers because they always multiply.
- When the smog lifts in Los Angeles, U.C.L.A.
- The dead batteries were given out free of charge.
- A dentist and a manicurist fought tooth and nail.
- A bicycle can't stand alone; it is two tired.
- A will is a dead giveaway.
- A chicken crossing the road: poultry in motion.
- Show me a piano falling down a mine shaft and I'll show you A-flat minor.
- When a clock is hungry it goes back four seconds.
- The guy who fell onto an upholstery machine was fully recovered.
- You are stuck with your debit if you can't budge-it.
- A lot of money is tainted; 'Taint yours,' and 'taint mine.'
- A boiled egg is hard to beat.
- He had a photographic memory which was never developed.

 Jake plans to make a fortune with his invention. It's a big metal box with a slot in one side and sign that says, "How gullible are you? To find out, insert \$50.00."