

## THE PAIN OF LOSING A CHILD

2018

Before I begin this story, I have to say that this is the most heart wrenching and difficult one that I have written so far...

A couple of days ago my husband received a phone call from his brother announcing that their son and his girlfriend had been killed in a car accident on I-95 in the Jacksonville, FL area. Oh, what devastating news... My husband was stunned to say the least and as I listened to their conversation, my heart sank and my mind temporarily went numb. He and his wife had just lost their one and only 23 year old child in this tragic incident, and no one could have prepared them for that. I can imagine they had prayed for a safe trip for their son before he left home. But it didn't happen.... How can these parents, Christian parents, deal with that?..

My husband and I have three sons and just the thought of losing one of them is overwhelming. Very often we hear that parents are not supposed to bury their children but the other way around. And I can totally agree with that. But in certain cases, God in his infinite wisdom sees it otherwise. As Christians, we know very well that everything on this earth has been given to us by God, including our children. And as our Sovereign God, it is his prerogative to reclaim what he sees fit for his purpose, and as hard as it is to accept, it is always for the ultimate good of his people.

However, when we're being afflicted to such extent as losing a child, how can we comprehend that a loving and merciful God would allow this to happen? What's his plan in all of this? What's his purpose? Oh, we could go on and on trying to understand, to search for answers, but it wouldn't do us any good because we can't see the whole picture as God sees it, and it wouldn't change anything. It wouldn't bring back the child we've lost...

After the first moments of sadness and despair set in, our mission for my husband and me is to help them as best as we can in their moments of grief. Praying God for comfort, strength and peace is certainly at the top of our list. But is there anything else we can do? Well, since they live in South FL and we live in the Jacksonville area where the accident happened, they will have their son cremated here. So, we've offered to bring his ashes with us when we go down to visit with them; an offer they gratefully accepted. A ten hour drive round-trip would be too much with everything they already have to take care of. To tell you the truth, this part is a very emotional mission we'll be undertaking. We can only imagine how they'll react when they get their son back... His ashes instead of himself returning home... God, help us all...

I know the Bible says that God will never give his children more than they can handle. God will never give them trials in which he will not sustain them. They will be enabled to do all they must do to get through them. And it is by faith that we can believe in his promises. So, we will first find solace in knowing that their son is with his Savior, Jesus, and his heavenly Father. Our emotions may be hard to handle and tears will keep flowing for a while, but we will believe that God will bathe us in his strength and peace. That will be his way of showing us how much he loves us... He will restore us...

To my brother-in-law and his wife, what more can I say to you? I have not experienced what you're going through. But lately I have witnessed the anguish, the pain and the sorrow of losing a child. I've been shedding tears as you've also been shedding yours... I can only say that God is the only one who can heal your wounded hearts, and I firmly believe that he will. In the meantime, rest assured that we will keep you in our thoughts and prayers.

I love you both dearly.

I am reminded of a prayer written by Mary Stevenson which I believe will bring comfort to our grieving hearts.

### **Footprints in the Sand**

*One night I had a dream.*

*I dreamed I was walking along the beach  
with the Lord..*

*Across the sky flashed scenes from my life..  
For each scene, I noticed two sets of  
footprints in the sand,  
one belonging to me, and the other to the Lord..*

*When the last scene of my life flashed before me,  
I looked back at the footprints in the sand.  
I noticed that many times along the path of my life  
there was only one set of footprints.  
I also noticed that it happened at the very lowest  
and saddest times in my life.*

*This really bothered me  
and I questioned the Lord about it:  
"Lord, you said that once I decided to follow you,  
you'd walk with me all the way.  
But I have noticed that during the most  
troublesome times in my life  
there is only one set of footprints.  
I don't understand why  
when I need you most you would leave me."*

*The Lord replied:  
"My precious child, I love you and would  
never leave you.  
During your times of trial and suffering,  
when you see only one set of footprints, it was then  
that I carried you."*

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