

Sunday, August 25, 2013 – Tell Me Why

There are a lot of questions that I've been asked through the years regarding religious matters where the answers seems to flow easily and is always at the ready. There are other times when the question causes my stomach to churn and my response is less than adequate for the subject. This weekend was one of those occasions.

My family was preparing for the celebration of the 60th wedding anniversary of my in-laws. In this day and age that is an accomplishment that few will ever obtain. It gave my wife and I an opportunity to see our daughter and son-in-law and revel in the excitement of their new apartment and 2 month celebration of their marriage. The weekend was beautiful in so many ways. Then a single phone call can change life in an instant.

I mentioned that two months ago my daughter and her husband, Garrett, were married. To know Garrett's family is to understand that they have closeness among all their relatives few families will ever experience. This was proven by those who were chosen to be groomsmen and bridesmaids in the wedding. One of the groomsmen, his cousin, married a wonderful young lady several years ago that my daughter loves dearly and feels very close to. That closeness will get stronger in the coming days. You see, the call that was received late Saturday afternoon was that this 26 year old young man, Garrett's cousin, was tragically lost in a car accident along with a friend of his. The question that turned my stomach: Tell me why...

How do you explain the loss of a wonderful young Christian, who had tremendous influence on all those he came into contact with, had a lovable personality, was a faithful child of God, was not afraid to let his faith shine through in all that he did and loved his wife and family dearly? If you can reply to that question in a manner which brings peace and comfort to the family, please let me know. The answer escapes me.

What I do know is events in life, both good and bad, happen. We experience joy and pain, happiness and sadness, ups and downs. What I also know is that regardless of the situation, God lives and reigns in heaven above; always has and always will.

The psalmist wrote, "Precious in the sight of the LORD Is the death of His saints." To us, death is hard and painful and not ever considered precious. Yet God sees things from an eternal view; this one will be forever in the presence of God.

In death there is comfort; comfort in the fond memories of this dear loved one and how he has touched all our lives, and comfort from the Lord. In 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 we

read, "But we would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them that fall asleep; that ye sorrow not, even as the rest, who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also that are fallen asleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we that are alive, that are left unto the coming of the Lord, shall in no wise precede them that are fallen asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

The death of God's own is not a senseless end to a pointless existence, but is the crowning glory of a life lived in faith and obedience. Christ used this very point in John 14 when he said, "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. And where I go you know, and the way you know."

As this family will grieve over the coming months and years, there are no tips to tell them how to deal with this loss. It will depend on each individual. But I can tell them this; Our father grieves with you. We have a savior that understands the pain and knows the hurt you feel. Lean on the Lord through prayer and study of His word. Lean on the fellow Christians around you who want to love you, hug you and be there with you. Be comforted by the memories you have and know that a reunion awaits.