



NightLight

A NEWSLETTER OF McLEAN MINISTRIES

"take heed....as to a light that shines in a dark place." II Peter 1:19

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Dear Friends,

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.


Romans 8:38,39



My Mom went Home on June 11, 2022. She was 92 years old. She was so ready, and looking forward to heaven. My Dad, also 92, grieves, yet still celebrates life this side of heaven. "God is good. God is good all the time," he says. "We live one day at a time."

We hear that phrase all the time in Christian circles: **live one day at a time**. What does that really mean? Do we ignore and forget the past, and make no plans for the future? Or could it mean giving the past as well as the future into His care? The Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ answers these questions. Among other truths, it reminds us to live fully in the present moment, in His Presence, every hour of every day. All our past hurts, all our fears of what the future may hold, we give to Him, there on the Tree. Forgiveness covers our past, and we have blessed assurance for our future. He is indeed our Redeemer, our Savior, our Lord.

We also hear that **God is good, all the time**. We hear it. We may quote it. But do we really believe it? God is love. All He is, and all He does, is good and loving. He is a Redeemer. He takes what the enemy means for evil, and turns it for good. Even death. At the Cross, Jesus Christ forever canceled the power of sin and death. Death is overcome by His glorious resurrection.

Have you surrendered to His love for you? Have you trusted our Heavenly Father to draw you to Himself? It is by faith, His faithfulness, that we trust and rely on Him, one day at a time. One death at a time. One hurt at a time. Yes, I am grieving. Yes, it hurts. And yet, at the same time, I know Mom has passed from these shadowlands into Real Life. And I know that our parting is only temporary. One day I shall join her in heaven, in His Presence for always. 

Love's Fullness in Emptiness


My Mom was also 92 when she left this world for the next. Mary and I both have expressed the truth that age does not seem to mitigate the sense of loss that comes with the passing of one's mother. After all, we have never been one moment on this planet without her. And now? There *is* an emptiness. But there is also, at the same time, a fullness - a completeness. For in their passing, there remains a covering of peace borne of Love that does not fade.

Some of you reading these words may have lost your mother much earlier or your circumstances were extra trying (or continue to be so!). Your experience may have left you with a different set of hurts, questions, and ongoing struggles. Please forgive us if we seem oblivious to the very different situation you may have suffered. Yet isn't that just the point? We are all unique in the various forms of our relational sufferings. How can any of us say with certainty that we understand the mystery of suffering, evil, and death? Though we may not ever understand this side of heaven, we can with full assurance trust the redeeming work of the Cross, knowing that God is overcoming evil with good, so much so that even death will one day die. Yet we grieve. No matter our particular details, most all of us do share a common awareness of the emptiness that loss brings. But what about the fullness? If there is no sense of ongoing meaning and goodness that fills the earthly void, can it be secured after the fact of a less than blessed passing? Love never dies. Love never fails. And what love may have been lacking on earth, can still be manifested beyond the limited boundaries of this earthly time.

Mary's mom was one of the most consistently kind people I have ever known. It was never a strain for her to be giving or compassionate. I never felt she was working hard to find patience or give care. It was just there. I'm sure she grew in that grace. But she had evidently long ago made it a daily practice. As a military wife, her entire nest was disrupted regularly and often. Because of the nature of Mary's Dad's work, she was left to deal with three very different daughters (Mary being the oldest) when he was away on military trips, and most often there was no family support nearby. She leaned into Jesus. She chose to love, serve, and give. One day at a time, Mary's Mom became what she practiced – a lover, a server, and a giver. She became what she beheld in the face of her Lord and Savior.

We all have a different story with different relationships involved. It is not ever wise to compare ourselves with others to see if we do, or do not, measure up. Still, there are examples set for us by those who have gone before us. And it is foolish not to draw from those examples, and allow them to invite us up. Who in your life (past or present) makes you want to be a better person?

I have a friend who is a prolific writer, story teller, and soul winner. His mom also recently went Home. My friend says that every day he checks in on his father, who after 65 years of marriage, is now alone. And every day he says that the last words his dad speaks to him are these: "Son, love your wife." He does not say these words out of deep regret, for he was a loving husband and father. But this daily reminder now comes from a new perspective that only finality can make poignantly clear. When it comes to love, we can always do better, love more, be less irritable, and far gentler and kinder. "Son, love your wife." I hear that for me. I pray you can adjust it to speak to your situation as is needed also.

On most days when I am rushing out the door, Mary will stop me and say with a kiss, "I love you." Often she will then add something like this, "We never know what the day may bring. Its best to keep love the main thing, always." For when it is all said and done, all that ultimately will matter is did we learn to love. 



Learn to Love

(Lyrics by Lynn DeShazo)



***At the end of days, when there is no more
Of our earthly ways, of strife and war
When Jesus stands among His own
He will ask us there, did we learn to love?***

***When He looks at me with searching eyes
Will I meet His gaze, will I laugh or cry?
When His holy flame touches all my works
Will gold remain or will they burn?***

***Jesus, Jesus faithful and true
Jesus, Jesus, help me love like You***

***There are very few important things
And of the few, only this, my King
That I follow You as You teach me, Lord
How to live my life, and learn to love***

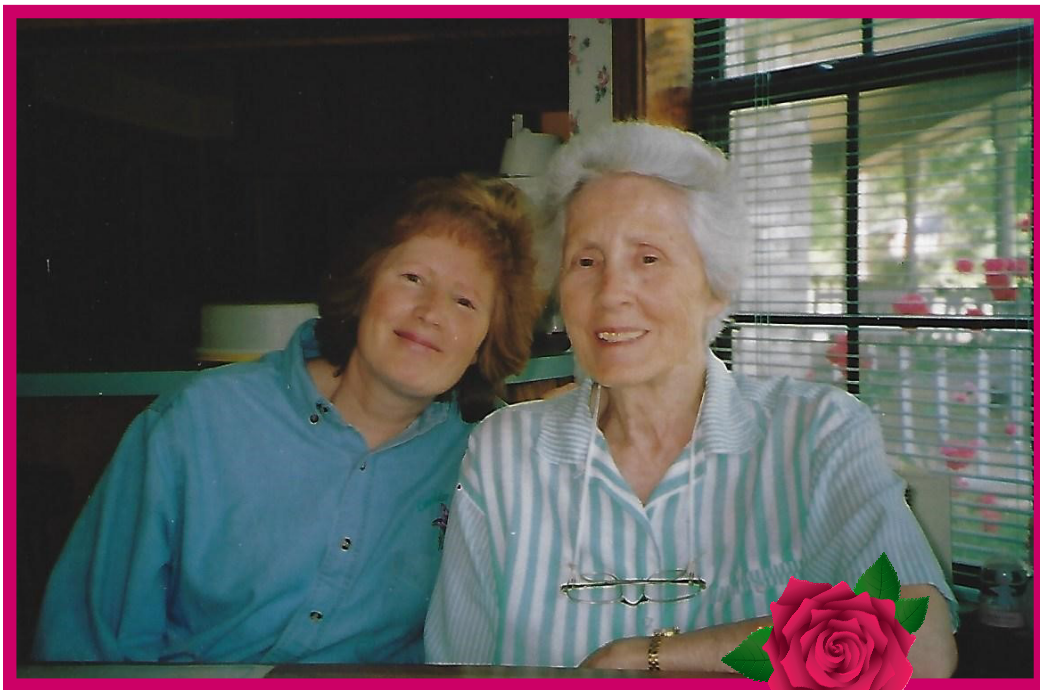
***When You come again in Your glory, Lord
When You appear with Your reward
When I give account for the deeds I've done
May I answer well, "Yes, I learned to love!"***

Closing Thoughts...



We've all heard it said that 'perspective is everything.' Let me clarify: **DIVINE** perspective is everything. Richard Wurmbrand, the founder of Voice of the Martyrs, suffered under the cruel hands of both Nazi, then Communist torturers till the bones in his feet were mostly broken, along with many other indignities. Yet he had no 'smell of smoke' on him. I have long been aware of my inability to grasp that level of spiritual power. But Pastor Wurmbrand sought to make it simple for us to understand. He said, "I deeply loved my abusers. Perfect love drives out all fear." One day at a time, are you learning to love?

Still Learning, Clay & Mary



Mary & her mom, 19 years ago

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