

## **JUST CHECKING IN #146 March 2014**

### **Memories Are a Treasure, Promises Are Even Better**

When a loved one dies, we are left behind. We are left behind with memories. Those memories may be both precious and painful. They may span months, years, decades... even a lifetime. We never know when or what will trigger a memory. Holidays, family events, a picture, a story, a saying may bring back a flood of memories. The sound of a laugh, a holiday, an old movie, the name of a town, a song, a smell, a smile... any or all of them may bring back memories of our loved ones that bless or burden the heart of us who are left behind. I have a drawer full of old diaries, pictures, and notebooks of my parents from their years on our five generation dairy farm. Each one brings back memories of our family and special times together. One is tragic, but most bring a smile to my face and a deep sense of gratitude for those years now long past. Time has changed many things, but the memories remain a treasure still. And when our family gathers together on those increasingly rare reunions, the smiles show and the stories roll as we unpack the treasured memories of years long past and gone.

Memories are a treasure. Save them. Share them. Pass them on to your children. Be grateful for the memories, yet don't live in the past. Don't let the memories become a prison that binds you to your past, or blinds you to the future God still has for you. Things have changed, but God hasn't. And just as He carried you and your loved one through the years gone by, so He will continue to carry you into the days yet to come. Never forget, that while memories are a treasure, promises are even better. For memories take us to the past, while promises carry us into the future. Here are 10 of my favorite promise passages that I pray will comfort you as you walk the days ahead step by step with the Shepherd of our souls, our Lord Jesus Christ.

#### **The Promise of Resurrection 1 Corinthians 15:51-58**

Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed-- in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." "O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?" The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

#### **The Promise of Restoration 2 Corinthians 5:1-9**

For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven, if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked. For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life. Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at

home in the body we are absent from the Lord. For we walk by faith, not by sight. We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord. Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him.

#### **The Promise of Revelation John 17:24**

"Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.

#### **The Promise of Return John 14:1-6**

"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."

Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?"

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

#### **The Promise of Rest Revelation 14:13**

Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, "Write: 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.'" "Yes," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them."

#### **The Promise of Residence Psalm 23:1-6**

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; My cup runs over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me All the days of my life; And I will dwell in the house of the LORD Forever.

#### **The Promise of Reward Philippians 1:21-23**

For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live on in the flesh, this will mean fruit from my labor; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell. For I am hard pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better.

#### **The Promise of Reunion 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**

But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep.

For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words.

### **The Promise of Renovation 1 John 3:1-2**

Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

### **The Promise of Realization 1 Corinthians 2:9**

But as it is written: Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him."

## **Meditation on the Home-going of a Loved One Gone.....home!**

As we planned the memorial service for my beloved mother in law, I was struck with the words I heard over and over from funeral directors, family and friends.... Words like "died... passed on... passed away... departed... gone... deceased." But as I read the scriptures I find another glorious reality that must be embraced for those and by those who know Christ Jesus as their personal Savior.

**She died... yet she is very much alive.** If "alive" means "aware, cognitive, active, engaged, vibrant"... then she is more alive than ever. "(S)he who believes in me will live, even though (s)he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die." John 11:25-26

**She didn't pass on or pass away... she passed through.** Jesus our forerunner passed through the heavens into the Father's presence and we follow Him. Hebrews 4:14 and 6:20

**She hasn't just departed... she arrived!** She began her journey towards heaven at age 9 She is not the "dearly departed".... she is the "delightfully arrived."

**She isn't just gone... she has come...** into the presence of the living God. Gone from us, but not gone for good! Her going from us was her coming to Him.

**She is deceased.** If "cease" means to stop, and "de" means to remove (like de-ice)... does "de-ceive" really mean to "remove that which stops?" Then I guess she is "*de-ceased*" after all! God removed that which was stopping her from seeing him face to face.

This is not to deny the reality of death, minimize the sorrow of our loss, or pretend that death is not the awful enemy that will be destroyed on the last day. But the biblical record is clear. "To be absent... is to be present!" Therefore, when the believer exits... he enters. When he departs... he arrives. When he's absent... he's present. And when he's gone... he's home!

***It Is Not Death To Die Henry Malan 1832***

It is not death to die  
To leave this weary road  
And join the saints who dwell on high  
Who've found their home with God

It is not death to close  
The eyes long dimmed by tears  
And wake in joy before Your throne  
Delivered from our fears

It is not death to fling  
Aside this earthly dust  
And rise with strong and noble wing  
To live among the just

It is not death to hear  
The key unlock the door  
That sets us free from mortal years  
To praise You evermore

**CHORUS:**

O Jesus, conquering the grave  
Your precious blood has power to save  
Those who trust in You  
Will in Your mercy find  
That it is not death to die