

MIDWEEK MISSIVE 08/24/18

This week I got the news that one of my cousins had passed away. Alan was about 6 years older than me, much closer in age to my older brother. He was the oldest son of my father's closest sister, who passed away in her 40's after a long battle with cancer. Alan's wife Jane also passed away in her early 40's of cancer. Alan was a lifelong farmer, right up until the time he was diagnosed with MS. Yet, in the past years, whenever I saw him, he was always ready with a laugh and a constant smile...just as he always. And that is what I will always remember when I think of him.

But, of course, I will also think of what tragedy he had seen in his life. I will wonder how he kept smiling. Oh, I know that he got angry, he got down, he had days he just wanted to not deal with the world. But, in the end, he kept going.

I also am reminded of how I have dealt with the losses in my life that shook me to my core. And the short answer is that God has never left me, and that has made all the difference in the world.

But when I reminisce about Alan, and others I have lost, I can't help but feeling like I didn't do enough when they were around. Have you ever felt that way? What opportunities did I miss? What could I have done to be helpful, to be a comfort? The fact is, this is not the most productive line of thought! Still, they are thoughts I deal with.

Then today, in my devotional reading - "Jesus Calling" - I read the first lines: "Entrust your loved ones to me; release them into my protective care. They are much safer with me..." And of course, I immediately knew that was right. Just I have leaned upon God to walk with me through my difficult times, I must trust to God to take care of those I love.

It is not easy to say goodbye to loved ones. It is not easy to see a loved one in pain. It is not easy to give things up to God. But when we do, we will be reminded of the power of God's love and grace. And that is something really, really good.

**Be peaceful,
Rev. Brad**

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"Preach the Gospel at all times. If necessary, use words." - Francis of Assisi