

Phoenix Rising

This grief newsletter is sent to members and friends of Paradise Valley United Methodist Church following the loss of a loved one. PVUMC pastors are available to you if you need one-on-one support. Contact the church office for more information at 602-840-8360. If you wish to be removed from the mailing list, contact the church office or e-mail ddoran@pvumc.org.

Debbie Doran, Editor

In the midst of GRIEF, we seek a concrete example to visualize the Presence of God's LOVE –

When I taught third grade, I did an experiment with my students to show how plants got their nutrients. I bought three white carnations from the store and placed each one in their own jar of clear water. I left one glass with clear water, added a few drops of red food coloring to the second glass, and a few drops of blue food coloring to the third. The next day when we looked at the flowers, we saw the flower in the clear water was still the original white color, but the one in the red water had begun to show red on the white, and the one in the blue water had begun to turn blue. My third graders were impressed with the experiment and began to understand the term osmosis, “the seeping of fluid through a seemingly solid barrier, such as a cell wall.”

Thinking of this experience reminds me how trusting God and His love for us opens a path through the barriers in our hearts and minds. This trust allows the Holy Spirit to seep into our beings, a different kind of osmosis. Just as the water changed the color of the flowers, the Holy Spirit changes us to be more in tune with God's presence in our lives. As we grieve, we can continue to rely on the power of the Creator, the actions and words of Jesus and the presence of the Holy Spirit in our hearts. We will continue to absorb God's PRESENCE and LOVE.¹

A Comfort When Grieving

He makes me to lie down in green pastures;
He leads me beside the still waters.

Psalm 23:2 (NKJV)

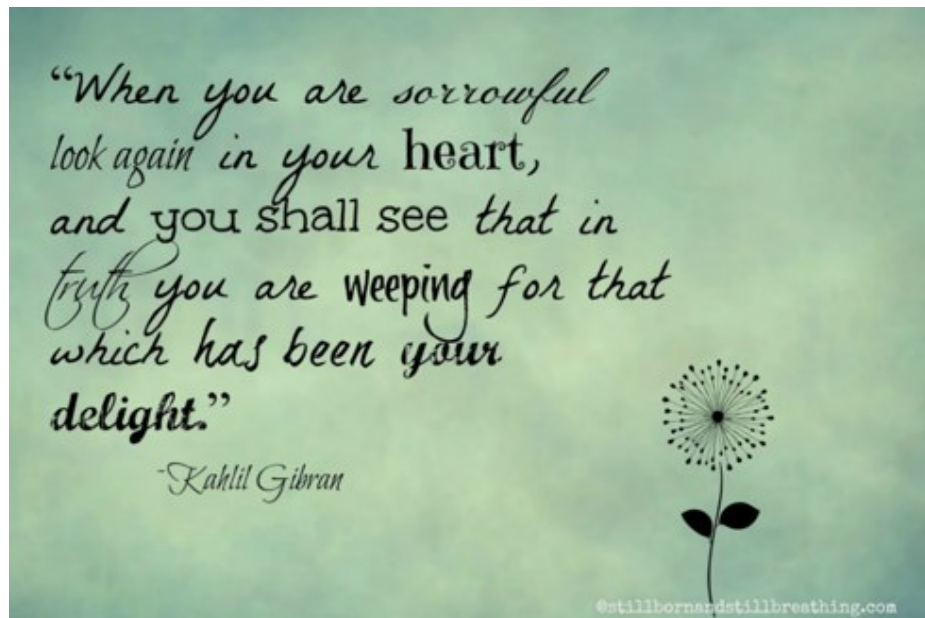
Note the two pronouns preceding the two verbs.

HE makes me...HE leads me...

Who is in charge? The Shepherd.

The shepherd selects the trail and prepares the pasture.

The sheep's job—our job—is to watch the shepherd.²



A Journey Through Grief

The Lord heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.

Psalm 147:3 (NIV)

“Dear Lord,” I prayed, “I feel as though I have reached the bottom of despair.” I was on my way home from my son’s funeral. What right did the people on the streets have to be happy? Why was the musician allowed to play a merry tune outside of the music store as I passed by? My world was shattered. Didn’t they understand?

The road loomed ahead of me out into the darkness. Then to my astonishment, as I approached a small village, an illuminated cross on a church came into my view. God, you are with me, I thought. You know the depth of my sorrow. The cross reminded me of the suffering Jesus endured for me, and I was comforted.

I knew that in time I would have to accept my son’s sudden death. Denial was not a choice. I began to realize I had been blessed to have had my son in my life for 33 years. Time is indeed a healer, but this fact is of no comfort when grief first strikes. As time has gone by, the lives of my relatives and friends have returned to normal, but mine has not. Working through grief isn’t easy, but it is necessary. And I know that only God’s constant love can deliver us from despair.

Let Us Pray

Dear Lord, thank you for being with us as we walk through the valley of death. Amen.³

Remember

Jesus said,

“Remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Matthew 28:20 (NRSVUE)

God Will Provide

When we come to the edge of the light we know and are about to step off into the darkness of the unknown,

of this we can be sure ...

Either God will provide something solid to stand on or ...

We will be taught to fly.⁴



Footnotes

1. Paula Rugen
2. *Everday Blessings* by Max Lucado November 20, 2004 -2005
3. Sylvia Engen Espe; Upper Room; Alberta, Canada; November 22, 2025
4. Anonymous