



4/12/09- 8:00 AM - Last night I heard it! I was sitting on my back porch staring up at the clear, (albeit chilly) night sky, and there it was, live in concert - the "Cricket Song!" - and they were playing my favorite tune - "Early Spring Night"! *(It doesn't take much to entertain me, I know.)*

Yesterday afternoon we attended the "surprise" birthday party of a very dear friend named Doris. While her party had been planned in advance to be held at the church's youth center, things became re-planned at the last minute as her husband Paul found himself admitted to the hospital with concerns over a possible heart attack. (So far all news is good concerning Paul's condition. I will keep everyone posted as to the outcome of his hospital stay as they are made available to me. Please continue to pray for him and Doris.)

Kelli's father and I went to visit Paul in the hospital around 3 PM and he told us that the hospital had given permission to have the party in one of their conference rooms so that Paul could be in attendance.

Walking the halls of this hospital immediately brought me back to September 08 as I walked passed the very chairs that the family gathered in to comfort one another as the news of Kelli's heart failure was delivered to us. I stood at the very spot overlooking the commons area below where I cried out to God in my heart that he not take her from me and where next to me stood her father, whom I had never seen with such a look of desperation and brokenness upon his face and remember how powerless I felt to offer any comfort to him.

Yet, as I momentarily flashed through these terrible moments in the past, my heart smiled with joy and thanked God that I stood here now, in this very location with my wife alive and doing well and I thanked Him once again for the gift He gave us that day.

As we passed through this area to Paul's room and after spending a few moments visiting with him, Al and I ventured on to the conference room to await the surprise party. As we walked down the long hallway that led to this room, we passed by the Chapel and immediately I felt a tug at my heart to step inside. I continued passed and went on to the conference room and the guests began to arrive and the party got underway. I believe Doris was very surprised and very blessed by this gathering of her family and friends and I was honored to share that moment with them.

As we prepared to leave the party, I made my way back down the hallway and as I approached the Chapel I again felt the same urging to step inside. I opened the door and stuck my head in

and did a quick scan of the room and shut the door. But again, the prompting from within invited me inside once more. So, I opened the door again and stepped inside and immediately found myself enveloped by a warm embrace of that same, sweet Spirit that drew me inside in those dark and uncertain days of September, that offered comfort to my soul and led my heart in prayer in that tiny little Chapel. It was in this quiet little place of solitude that I knelt in prayer before God and pleaded with Him using the words of His own Son saying, "Let this cup pass from her, (speaking of Kelli) and it was there that I recognized the assurance given that all would be well.

As I stood in that room in quiet reflection of that night, my soul felt once again that absolute peace - so much in fact that I didn't want to leave the room. I could have stayed the night once again in this place and just bask in the quiet presence of the Lord.

Before leaving I offered my heart filled thanks to God, repeating to Him once again, that there is nothing I can say, nothing I can do, though I spend the entirety of my life attempting to find the words or the actions to express; that would ever be sufficient to thank Him or ever come close to repay Him for the blessing of that day, when He reached down from Heaven and gave Kelli back to us.

God is truly Wonderful in all His ways. The picture above this post was taken early this morning from my back porch. The view took my breath away as nature once again delivered the message to my heart this Easter Sunday morning to praise the name of the Lord in all things.

I would encourage each of us to take a moment today to reflect upon the miracle of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, who paid the wages of sin for all mankind, that whomsoever might believe in Him should not perish, but have Everlasting Life.

Think about all Jesus went through from the agony of the Garden; to the death of the Cross; to the burial in the Tomb; and to His Resurrection in Glory and Triumph over death and sin. The Son of God, who knew no sin, took upon Himself the sin of the world. He took every punishment that we each deserved and endured the wrath of God upon Himself. Hanging on that cross, in the midst of His pain and agony; in the midst of mockers and scorners; hanging even between to common criminals, one of which said to him, "If you be the Son of God, save yourself and us." Jesus did not lash out at anyone. From the very cross which was taking His life, Jesus loved us and He prayed asking His Father to forgive "them" for they know not what they are doing. Imagine if you will the torment of Jesus' soul as the sins of the world were placed upon his shoulders and His Father with whom He is one, in whose presence He has dwelt from all Eternity to all Eternity, withdrew from Him and let the wage of that sin be paid by His Only Begotten Son and Jesus cried out, "FATHER! Why have you forsaken me?!"

Can you even begin to imagine the depth of the agony and torment of Jesus' heart in that moment! Jesus had never before and never since experienced separation from the Father! But for us he endured that bitterness of hell so that we won't ever know the darkness of that separation if we choose to accept and believe in Him.

Jesus gave us the example in perfection that we should follow. He showed us how to love. "Greater love has no man than this than he lay down his life for his friends." The world in which we live teaches us to focus on our self. To watch out and take care of # 1. But Jesus taught that our life is not ours, but God's and we are to seek His will, not ours in all things. In the Garden, as Jesus prayed to the Father before his betrayal, feeling the weight of the burden upon Him said, "Father, if you would, take this cup from me, but nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done!"

That's a tough cross to bear in this generation of "ME, ME, ME!" Jesus said, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, might, mind and strength and love your neighbor as yourself."

If Jesus was willing to endure a punishment that was rightfully ours to bear, without casting stones; without hurling accusations against us; without wavering in His love for us, how can we then deal with one another in a less manner regarding even lesser things?

Remember Him today. Thank Him for your life, for the blessings, past, present and future. Thank Him even for the trials knowing that God is in control and works ALL THINGS to the good of those who love and fear Him. Even if you can't see "light" at the end of the tunnel from where you stand right now - know with certainty that everything is working for your good - that God will use each circumstance to take you to the place He has designed for you to be. We see things through a glass darkly. God sees things from the height of Heaven's endless view. So, although we may not at the moment be able to find our way clear of whatever trial or circumstance we now find our self, God has already prepared the way through, all He asks is that we trust Him and follow His lead.

May God multiply His blessing on us all.