

This is the Day...Wednesday

October 13, 2021

Nothing but Hope

“Cast your cares on the Lord and He will sustain you; He will never let the righteous be shaken.” (Psalm 55:22)

As God has led me to share these devotions each day, I have always resisted the temptation to share many stories from my years working in the Hospice program in middle Tennessee. My years with Hospice were some of the most fulfilling and powerful years of my ministry and they certainly gave me a new perspective on life and God’s presence in my life. But I realize these stories can also be filled with sadness and loss. As I have considered the above text from Psalm 55, there is one story from my past experience that will make this text applicable to our lives today.

It is the story of Cheryl Black and her son Tyler. I met Cheryl in the fall of 1993 when I was referred to her through the Hospice program. Cheryl was a single mom, living with her son Tyler who was about eighteen months old and had a rare blood disorder. The very first time I went to visit with them, Tyler ran up to me, a complete stranger, and gave me a big hug. Tyler looked like the Gerber baby. He was beautiful with his blond hair, fair complexion, and blue eyes. As I discussed Tyler’s condition with Cheryl during my first visit, she told me that the doctors had given them absolutely no hope. They could give Tyler more treatments, but it would only make him sick and would not cure his disease. They told her that Tyler would not make it to his second birthday.

What do you do when all the signs tell you that there is no hope? How does a mom even take her next breath knowing that she only has a short time left with her young son? Cheryl was not shaken by the hopeless words from the doctors. She did not treat Tyler as a child with a chronic illness. She taught Tyler to live each day with joy. And her attitude was reflected in Tyler’s smile and the hugs he shared, even with a complete stranger. Cheryl taught me that, even in a hopeless world, if you cast your cares upon the Lord, you will experience nothing but hope.

Over the next year I visited with Cheryl and Tyler many times. As his condition worsened, Cheryl’s hope was never shaken. I was there when Tyler celebrated his second birthday with his Mom and a few family members. It was a celebration and triumph like none I had ever witnessed. The hope of his loving, righteous Mom had sustained him, and he had beat the odds. Later that year, in late July, I stood with Cheryl as she held Tyler and he went to be with the Lord. Even with tears in her eyes, there was still an amazing hope. Nothing but hope.

