

Chapter 25

Our Last Month Together

(by Corrie Moerman)

During the month of March/98, we had talked about many things which now stand out clearly in my mind, as I see it now, preparation for Dad's Home-going and for me to go on alone for as long as God allows me to stay.

In March, I asked Dad to bring the songsheet from downstairs which we had prepared for our funerals. We had learned some new songs in the church which we might want to add. Dad read over the sheet and I sang most of them. When we were finished, Dad said "Mom, I'll be so jealous of you if you are the one at my funeral service to be able to celebrate." You know what my answer was? "Dad, this thought came to me too just a couple of days ago!"

Psalm 46:10 came to my mind often during that time: "Be still and know that I am God." I asked Dad why this text would come to mind during our 50th Anniversary. He answered, "I don't know Mom. We always have to be still, whatever happens to us." This was part of God's preparation for me as well, especially when I went through the darkest day of my life when I found Dad gone to Glory, so terribly unexpectedly, on March 28th.

I have no reason to believe that Dad knew that he would be called to his Heavenly Home so soon. He has always shared everything, pain and aches included. When we were on one of our last walks on our bush path, I said to him: "This bush will mean nothing to me if you are not here anymore." Dad answered "I feel exactly the same, Mom. It means nothing to me either if you are not here with me." There and then I came to the conclusion that the farm should be sold when one of us was called Home, and I shared that with the children on Sunday, March 29th.

Another question I asked Dad one evening when we were relaxing in our chairs was "What value will our witness and teaching be if we are not able to testify of God's goodness and mercy when one of us is called Home?" We talked about this for a while, trying to comprehend what it would be like to be alone (which you can't when you are still together). We promised each other that by the Grace of God, we would live our lives as before as soon as we were able to adjust to being alone. We would be the father / mother as before as much as possible as before and the Opa / Oma to the grand and great grandchildren. We realized that only a miracle from God could make this come to pass.

I have received some healing already in these weeks, but the longing pain for Dad's prayers, wisdom and love have not much subsided yet. I know that God will continue His healing and I trust Him completely to give me a goal in life based on being a witness for Him, as long as God gives me breath. I am able to thank God for taking Dad first - which was hard to do at first - but I believe with all my heart that His ways and thoughts are higher than mine. I have peace in my heart and am able to "Be still and know that (He is) God". As long as I get the comfort out of God's Word and walk in faith, I am able to go on.

God has given me much comfort through Scripture. The day before the funeral, the text "Though He died, through His faith He is still speaking" (Hebrews 4:11a) was given. In the early morning hours that day God's Word came so clear to me from Nehemiah 8:10b "Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength". The morning of Dad's funeral - which I dreaded as the darkest hour of my life - became an experience of God's Glory. The "sting of death" was indeed removed and victory took over. Even though we grieved intensely at times, I never thought we would be able to sing at Dad's grave. But God made it possible to sing "*He is Lord*" and "*Alive, Alive, Alive Forevermore, My Jesus is Alive*". He gave that joy which became our strength.

The day thereafter, I was too tired for anything. At first, I opened my Bible at random and Psalm 71:14 stood out "But I will continually hope in Him, and praise Him more and more." These words brought me through the second memorial service. I have learned to understand John 15:5 better than ever before "Without Me, you can do nothing." How true this is and how comforting that we don't have to take one step without Him!

The first night no sleep came near. I felt like sinking in my grief and sorrow. I fought it all night long until I opened God's Word at daybreak. Then, my darkest day and night ended and moments of comfort came floating in my tired mind. It was very clear to me that God came to rescue me from excessive grief which takes more strength than we have.

Many people suffer during a lengthy illness knowing that these are the last weeks or months together. We were spared this and lived our lives together joyfully to the last day, unaware, yet prepared.

I read in one of the cards I received:

*Night falls, but day dawns to replace it
Grief comes, but time will ease the pain
Life ends, but death cannot erase it (Alive forevermore!)*

In memory, love always remains.

And –

*O the deep, deep love of Jesus
Vast, unmeasured, boundless, free!
Rolling as a mighty ocean
In its fullness over me
Underneath me and all around me
Is the current of Thy Love
Leading onward, leading Homeward
To my glorious Home above.*