

3/8/06

Encouragement for Today

“Missing You”

Marybeth Whalen, Author, Proverbs 31 Speaker Team Member

Key Verse:

Luke 24:51, “While He was blessing them, He left them and was taken up into Heaven.” (NIV)

Devotion:

When my brother graduated with his Ph.D., he decided to follow his dreams and move cross-country to Napa Valley, California, to work. He was young and there was no better time in his life to do such a thing, so we all supported his decision, though it was hard having him move so far away.

Perhaps the person it was hardest on was his best friend/girlfriend, Tonia. Their burgeoning relationship was thrown into the realm of the unknown as they contemplated how to maintain a cross-country romance. A sadness hung in the air between them as Tonia struggled with supporting his dreams yet wanting to hold onto him. My heart went out to them as I wondered what I would do if I were in her position.

I remember watching Tonia in the days before he left. The weight on her heart was visible and I could feel the gap his absence would leave in her life as she went on without him—visiting the same places they frequented, passing by where he had lived and working in the same lab where they had once met. I knew that not a moment would go by that she did not miss him, and I also knew that her life would not be the same without him there.

And then my thoughts turned to the disciples and how they must have felt when they faced the departure of their loved One, Jesus. Though He had told them many times that He could not stay with them, they must have been in denial that He would actually not be with them one day. How different life must have been once He was gone! Surely they passed the same places, remembered His words to them and felt an ache in their hearts where He had once been. I imagine that the weight on their hearts was visible.

There are days I feel that way about missing Jesus. Though I was not one of His disciples in Biblical times, I am one of His followers now. I feel like they did as I search the skies and hope to catch a glimpse of His return. The things of this earth cannot fill the hole in my heart that is there just for Him. My need for a relationship with my Savior cannot be replaced by the cheap substitutes the world has to offer. I will always miss Him, just as I am sure the disciples did after He ascended into Heaven.

And yet, I have hope of being reunited with Him, which fills my heart with joy and makes life in a fallen world more bearable. The disciples obviously felt this same kind of joy, as Luke 24:52-53 tells us: “Then they worshiped Him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God.” Next time I start missing Jesus, I plan to adjust my focus towards worship and praise, just as the disciples did. I plan to respond to His absence by preparing for His return and leading others to Him so that their empty places can be filled as well.

And what happened with my brother and Tonia? Well, he spent two years pursuing his dreams in California before returning to the East Coast. Just this past October, after a long wait, they were united as husband and wife. At their wedding, I was reminded that we are Christ’s bride, and we are waiting for his return as well. How I long for that happy ending that will surely come when we will be united with Him as His bride. In the meantime, I watch and wait and hope and miss Him, every day.

My Prayer for Today:

Dear Heavenly Father, I thank You for sending Your perfect Son to this earth to make it possible for us to join You in Heaven. I long to be united with You, according to Your perfect plan. I thank You for the hope I find in Jesus. Help me to share Him with others so that they can find that hope as well. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Application Steps:

Is there someone in your life who needs to hear about Jesus? Make some small step today to connect with them so that you may ultimately share Him with them.

Reflection Points:

Is there a hole in your heart that can only be filled with Jesus? Is there a sadness in your life that you can't quite put your finger on? It might be that you are simply missing Him and need a relationship with Him. Think about the things in your life that you are trying to fill the emptiness with. Ask Him to fill you up and heal your hurting heart today.

Power Verses:

Acts 1:9-11, "After He said this, He was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid Him from their sight. They were looking intently up into the sky as He was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. 'Men of Galilee,' they said, 'why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.'" (NIV)

Ecclesiastes 3:11, "He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end." (NIV)

Matthew 24:46, "It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns. I tell you the truth, he will put him in charge of all his possessions." (NIV)

Additional Resources:

Do You Know Him?

<http://proverbs31.gospelcom.net/knowHim.htm>

Captivating, by John and Stasi Eldridge

http://proverbs31.gospelcom.net/newresources_captivating.htm

Becoming a Woman Who Listens to God, by Sharon Jaynes

http://proverbs31.gospelcom.net/newresources_becomingAWoman.htm