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THANKSGIVING!

(Psalms 26:7 That I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all thy wondrous works). This has been a difficult year. How can I be thankful this year? I was raised to be patriotic. Thanksgiving is an American holiday. And the Bible says to be thankful.

Daddy died. This is a difficult year to be thankful. (Psalm 100:4 Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name). If I want to be in His courts, I will have to be thankful, even if it is a sacrifice to do so. (Psalms 107:22 And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoicing). God knows that this is hard. (Psalms 116:17 I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the Lord).

God was merciful. God gave us two months. Daddy could have been hit by a car, or had a heart attack, or maybe died in a tower. What a shock. Bam! Here one day, gone the next! Some people have to nurse a loved one for several years. But God limited Daddy's and our suffering to two months. And then God arranged it so we had to wait two weeks to bury him. He gave us a little bit of time to get some strength, so we could face our friends. God used time as a blessing.

I just love being a Mom! When my kids were little I took them to T-ball. I remember when I first met the coach. He made an announcement He said, "every game will be a tie, no team will ever win or lose. We will go for ice cream after every game!" He wanted this to be a fun experience for everyone including the opposing team. Now that's my kind of sport! Have you ever watched T-ball? Some kid always runs the wrong way. Or there is the little girl in the outfield: she stamps her little foot, she is indignant that someone threw the ball to her while she was doing her hair. And inevitably there is the kid who leaves the field and runs toward the parking lot because someone said, "go home." We would laugh till our sides split.

This summer my son announced his desire to play soccer. Soccer? I don't know anything about that. A few phone calls later I said I would sign him up. It only cost \$10.00, some shin guards, red socks, and this plastic thing you put in your mouth, supposedly to protect your teeth. But I am convinced its sole purpose is intimidation. When you see that thing coming at you, you just want to drop the ball and run! They would provide the T-shirt.

We live in a small town and I began to enjoy soccer very much. At practice we mothers would cluck over a new baby, admire those macramé lawn chairs, trade recipes and discuss the price of chicken. Then the night of the first game comes and all the Daddies come out to watch. All the parents cheer on the kids and holler directions. My son runs and kicks the ball and stops. My husband hollers "Schuyler, get in the game! Run after the ball." Schuyler makes eye contact with his daddy and puts his hands out. I say

“there is something wrong!” We are both out of our seats, very worried. The coach very gently says, “He is not allowed to run any further. Your son is doing just fine.” In the car on the way home we learn that there are invisible lines on the field and he can only run so far. At the next game he runs past that invisible line. But we have learned, instead of yelling our ignorance across the field, I whisper to my husband, “How can he go over there now but not last game?” My husband puts his arm around me, draws me close and says “I’ll explain it to you later.” Which means he doesn’t know either. In the car on the way home we learn that there are different rules for different positions. And his coach rotates positions so every child gets a chance to learn the rules of each position.

Let’s talk about Daddy’s death. He talked about running with the ball. I do not believe he did anything wrong. This was not a punishment for a sin. He lived an exemplary life. He loved his family. He was a great prophet. He was a super Bible student. He was an excellent teacher. He loved his students. When he was sick he prayed for forgiveness for anything he was unaware of. There was no reason for him to die! He was just not allowed to run any further. My hope is that in this complicated game with different rules for different positions, maybe some of us can run the length of the field. Maybe some of us can go the whole way. Even though we are all at the same age level, maturity level. We are all Kings and Priests. (I Peter 2:9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light).

My mother raised a lady. My father was a tutor to the Kings and Priests. I was one of his many students. (Revelation 1:6 And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen). (Revelation 5:10 And hast made us unto our God kings and priests; and we shall reign on the earth).

It would dishonor my mother for me to behave anything less than a lady. It would dishonor my father for me to behave anything less than a King or Priest.

If you would read a self-help book, it might tell you to let it out. Go ahead and scream. If you hide it all inside you will get a stomach ulcer. I want to tell you that as royalty you don’t have that luxury. You must behave as a royal 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Now I’m not saying you have to always have your hair and nails done. You might catch me scrubbing the kitchen floor in my bathrobe. God looks at the inner man. Your behavior speech and thoughts are what I am talking about. If you want to be a King and Priest you must behave like one. I don’t know if you really want to be a King and Priest, but I do know what Daddy wanted for you. He would want you to have continued revelation; he would want Kingship and Priesthood for you. (Proverbs 4:7 Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding). You are allowed to get mad at God. You are not allowed to get mad at your neighbor! You are not allowed to destroy property! I know you hurt, but that does not give you permission to hurt someone else!

Princess Diana went to a ball. She danced all night, and her feet hurt. While standing in the receiving line, she slipped her shoes off. Under that long ball gown no one knew. Her aids came and asked her to dance with one more foreign dignitary. She was embarrassed to be caught without her shoes, and she giggled while putting them back on, but with all the decorum of her office, she smiled and danced gracefully, even though her feet hurt! My kids say “smile and nod.”

King David and Bath Sheba had a baby that died. David cried, prayed, wailed, gnashed his teeth, and put ashes on his head, trying to get God to spare the child’s life. It didn’t work. The child died anyway. (II Samuel 12:20 Then David arose from the earth, and washed, and anointed himself, and changed his apparel, and came into the house of the Lord, and worshiped: then he came to his own house; and when he required, they set bread before him, and he did eat). Then King David got up and washed his face. When Daddy was sick we all wailed, prayed, and cried. It didn’t work. He died anyway. Now it is time to get up and wash your face. Crying now won’t bring him back. Did that say worship? Now? Yes! . . . and then eat. It is thanksgiving; you should eat! And furthermore the Bible says eat meat! (1 Timothy 4:1-3 Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; 2 Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; 3 Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them

which believe and know the truth). That says eat meat with thanksgiving.

(Psalm 95:2 Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms).

Why would God let our tutor go? Maybe he is not needed anymore. Maybe your coronation is near!

The Bible says death and life are in the power of the tongue. (Proverbs 18:21 Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof). It doesn’t say in the power of the thoughts, or actions, it says tongue. When you confess something with your mouth you make it so.

Today I challenge you to become the King and Priest that Daddy tutored. Confess it with your mouth.

I will be a King and a Priest!

(Colossians 4:2 Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving).

As I look around I see a lot of hurting people. People are hurting because they lost their teacher, their prophet, their friend, their spiritual father, and their loved one.

In my position as a King and Priest, I want to tell you something to comfort you. Daddy loved you, each and every one of you as individuals. I have spoken to a room full of people and I see a room full of people. He saw individual people. He prayed with you and for you. He cried with you. He did love you very much.

Someone once said there are some things in life you never get over, you just learn to live with. Don't try to understand Daddy's death. You would just make yourself go crazy. Somehow learn to get on with life.

Now I want to tell you about Mom. You can probably guess what Dad went through. Everyone knows someone who died of cancer. But let me tell you how Mom handled a very tough situation. Mom was the most loving spouse you can imagine. When I play it back in my mind it is like a movie. She never left his side. She slept in the hospital sitting up in a chair all night because it was her turn. Anyone of us would have taken her turn, but she wouldn't budge. We learned about palliative care. The hospital wanted to keep him until the end. But Mom said, "No, I want to take him home. I will take care of him as long as I can." She never lost her cool. She never got too emotional. She knew she had to keep a cool head to make smart decisions. I'm very proud of her. She is my role model for a King and Priest!

When Daddy died, someone told me, "Don't remember the sickness, the pain, the sunken cheeks, the hollow eyes, the slurred speech. Remember the wisdom, the knowledge, trips, gifts, the love." They told me it would be easier to accept his death. And if I did this I would heal quicker.

Then . . . as I think of God, I shouldn't remember the unanswered prayers, the unfulfilled promises, the silence, and the broken covenant. I should remember God healed Sunshine's heart, my kidney; God was with me in the fire. I should remember when God DID talk to me,

when He shared with me during Bible study. The love.

If you are a student of Daddy's you have probably been a Christian for a long time. You have your own God experiences to dwell on. Focus on the good memories, not the bad.

Remember God Loves You! Daddy did love you. And we want to be loving Kings and Priests, not bitter.

(Revelation 7:12 Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God forever and ever. Amen).

You can do this! You can be thankful this Thanksgiving.

To God be the glory!
Diane C. Sutton