

PK's Perspectives... My Seat

The following excerpt is from a pseudo-blog written by Paula Hooper (aka HOOP to those who know her best). Paula lives in Athens, GA. She follows Jesus Christ, shares community with the tribe of First Baptist Church in Athens, is a long time SS teacher, retreat leader, and church secretary. Paula is in her early sixties, married, has one daughter, one grandchild in hand and one on the way. There are many descriptors I could offer to help you form an estimation of Paula. But here's the focal tidbit of information I want you to know for now: Paula has Parkinson's Disease. And in her blog, Paula shares her experiences of a life journey tinted by the company of PD. In the blog I am excerpting, Paula is writing about reconciling the circumstances of her life (what she refers to as "MY seat") with the substance of her faith. Listen to Paula's heart...

- "When confronted with adversity, especially a non-curable, progressive disease, it is easy to experience moments of frustration and to occasionally view those around me as sitting in chairs that are either planted on greener pastures or, conversely, suffering on parched wasteland. Thus, I use the circumstances of others' lives as my plumb line. To me, something is inherently wrong in this, basing my life on the less fortunate circumstances of another, or in pitying myself for challenged health in light of those my same age and circumstance who enjoy good health and active outings with spouses and grandchildren. My learning curve for all this is that I've come to realize that my place is just that...my place. My seat; not earned, not delivered by an angry God as punishment, not my fault and indeed not the fault of anyone. It is simply MY SEAT. Yes, there are worse seats and better seats. It is easy to speculate on what I might do if I did not sit in this seat or drum up a bit of guilt from the realization that, yes there are many worse off than me. In viewing the best seats in the house and running the gamut of emotions handed to me by PD, I have discovered that I need to be reminded of what I have known for years. That is, as Barbara Brown Taylor might say, to move away from the belief business and back into the believing business. I worked to move toward the kind of faith that has nothing to do with being sure of what I believe and everything to do with simply trusting God to catch me when I am unsure of everything. This has given me a whole new freedom. A freedom to not feel I need answers for everything. A freedom not to speculate too heavily on what tomorrow will bring, a freedom from asking why I wound up in this seat and freedom to stop looking at seats occupied by others with envy or pity. It has allowed me to accept the most simple of truths...to accept and to thrive in the place I'm sitting. MY seat!! Truly the best seat in the house."

My friend, who also happens to be the Physical Therapist that helped me take my first wobbly steps at St. Mary's Hospital 3 ½ years ago, "introduced" me to Paula Hooper via a Facebook link. Jennifer, my PT friend, and Paula do life together in Athens. To quote my PT friend Jennifer, "The last seven sentences are absolute GOLD." I agree. This is good stuff. I've played the futile game of weighing my circumstances against the circumstances of others; some of you may be lamenting, "Why me?" at this very moment. I hope Paula's wisdom encourages you. Cya in Sunday school & Worship, PK.

