

9.29.13

### With Hope Alive In Our Hearts.

This Wednesday past we sent our beloved boy, Maximus {our dog}, on to glory. He was old and he was tired. You could see it in his eyes, you could watch it in his body after a grueling trip up the back-porch steps... the same steps he used to race up like a squirrel on a shot of espresso just five years before. His spirit was willing, it was strong, but his body was not.

We *grieved* ...almost, but not quite, like **“those who have no hope”** {1 Thes. 4:13}. **The loss is enormous.** And deserves whatever weight and worth our hearts have decided to give it. My experience as a shepherd of souls and counselor of crises has led me to believe that quite often *Abba* uses the pain of the present to put us in touch with the pain of the past. I.e., to tap into the well of ‘ungrieved grief’ most of us walk around with bubbling beneath the surface of the soul. And to relieve it, to allow us to pour it out, to process it, to forgive it if necessary, and to be comforted by His tender mercies {2 Cor. 1:3-5}.

In my ‘Interwebs’ tribute to a fallen Warrior, I wrote these words:

To the best dog that ever was or ever will be: Maximus Decimus Caninus. For twelve and a half years of love and loyalty, playfulness and protection. May your bedtime growls be heard in the Halls of Heaven.

**“Then I saw a New Heaven and a New Earth, for the first Heaven and the first Earth had passed away...”** {Rev. 21:1}. Jesus **“will wipe every tear from their eyes. Their will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away. He who was seated on the Throne said, ‘I am making everything new!’”** {21:4-5a}.

*This* is restoration and redemption: **“Behold, I am making *all things new*”** — not ‘all new things.’ I’m banking on it. I love you, buddy ...and I’ll see you on the Other Side.

This was not something I just happened to throw out blindly in the midst of emotion. I’ve thought this through at length for several years, primarily because of the questions of so many grieving Saints. Yes, over the loss of someone and something as precious to them as a pet.

The passages in Revelation end on a note of Triumph, a *resounding* shout from the Halls of Heaven that evil is vanquished, darkness has been banished, *all* is well, a New Creation has come into being and all manner of things shall be well. Forevermore. They speak of many things, but uppermost in the minds of those who

choose to believe they speak of Restoration and Renewal: ‘the action of returning something to a former person, place, or condition.’ In this case, our Universe’s {the ‘New Heaven and New Earth’s’} original intention: as perfect, pristine, sinless and absent of evil, a place where the beauty and glory and goodness of God shine undimmed!

**“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who keeps on asking *receives*; he who keeps on seeking *finds*; and to him who keeps on knocking, the door will *finally* be opened. Which of you, if his son asks for a roll of bread, will give him a round rock? Or if he asks for some fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, though you are capable of *immense evil*, know how to give *good* gifts to *your* children, how much *more* will your *Abba* in Heaven give good gifts to those who ask Him!”** — Jesus of Nazareth {Matt. 7:7-11}.

**Our *Abba* specializes in mighty works of restoration and renewal.** The question here is: Why, in a perfect Kingdom ruled by a perfect King with the wisest, most gracious, most generous and loving heart ever imaginable, would He not restore to us those things which have brought us such holy joy, which have shown us such unconditional love, such fierce protection, such undying loyalty? Do they not reflect His glory in magnificent ways... often far more, and far more faithfully, than we who are created **“in His image”** {Gen. 1:26-27}? Indeed.

The thoroughly Biblical concepts of restoration and redemption, the removal of the Curse and renewal of all Creation, healing and wholeness through the Resurrection of the King, are foundation stones of our theology here at J114M, the foundation stones of *any* ‘forward-thinking’ theology, any theology which aspires to an eternal perspective. **They are our only Hope as the Children of God.** Not sure if you’ve noticed, but true and genuine Hope — for joy, for peace, for Love and a Life *beyond* the walls of this world — is not exactly growing on trees. In fact, apart from the Kingdom of Grace and its Savior-King Jesus it can’t be found *anywhere* in this world!

But it *can* and *will* be found, fulfilled in Him, one glorious Day.

And that’s the point.

— Ric Webb  
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