

More from Megan L. Anderson, Feb. 27th,2016

Caregiving to grandparents with varying degrees of blindness, deafness, mobility, cognition, and emotional stability has a way of putting mortality into perspective. Humanity is a fragile thing. Our bodies get sick, break down, and sustain injury. Sometimes our minds don't work as they should. Emotions ebb and flow with utter unpredictability. I confess all this frustrates me – angers me even. I don't like the idea of being limited or breakable; and nothing tests my patience in that regard more than caregiving. Witnessing loved ones decline – people who spent years adventuring in the arctic and braving South Pacific jungles – is nothing if not harrowing. I can't imagine how it must feel from their perspective.

So it's inconceivable to me that Jesus willingly swapped his infinite divine power for a thirty-three year sentence in a fleshly cage. Can you imagine trading your life for three decades as a speck of dust? But that's exactly what he did. Instead of maintaining holy distance from the decay of this world, he got down on our level so we could know a God of empathy. He experienced human brokenness in every way so we would have lasting hope. But most of all, Christ forfeited heaven so that no barriers would separate us from his perfect love.

I'll be the first to tell you that I don't love perfectly. Not even close. Little things like finding wadded up tissues stuffed in odd places throughout my grandparents' house and sitting with them in waiting rooms where insensitive observations about fellow patients and medical staff fly like shrapnel through the air can plunge my attitude into a downward spiral. I turn brusque and snap when I don't mean to. I fail to honor them as I should. It's in those guilty moments I'm reminded of how desperately I needed Jesus to do what he did.

I can't "fix" my grandparents. They are as frail and human as they come. The fact that they require so much help doesn't bother me; it's the way their weaknesses reflect my own that stings. I don't like the idea of being limited or breakable, but that is exactly what I am. Jesus knew that when he agreed to take flesh on himself. Doesn't that qualify him as the ultimate caregiver? He not only empathizes with every bodily ache and pain but those of the heart too, and offers healing through his Holy Spirit in us. I thank God for taking care of this tired, grouchy little soul of mine though I certainly don't deserve it, and for empowering me in striving to emulate his selflessness in the lives of those I love.

Here's to all you caregivers out there! May you sense God's ministry to your own hearts as you tend to the needs of others. God bless you.

- Megan L. Anderson