

Mark's Remarks

Music has been a part of my family for years. Back in the early seventies, Dad and Mom produced two albums and for much of the seventies, traveled to different churches, bringing with them the songs of the Gaithers, popular songs of the time, and familiar hymns. To this day, no one can equal Dad when he passionately sings, "What a Day That Will Be." One of these albums was dedicated to my brother Jim who was tragically killed in a car/bicycle accident but I imagine each time they sung, they both were dedicating their music ministry to his memory. I still miss him. Maybe that is why Dad sings that song with such passion, knowing the embrace that awaits the Father and his son and the reunion and embrace that awaits a father and his son. What a day *that* will be.

Yet, I often dreaded going to different churches because I knew that meant coffee for the grown-ups sitting in the living room, and cheese and dried beef sandwiches with juice for us kids sentenced to the table. Evidently not quite coordinated enough to sit in a Lazy Boy, knees together, balancing a tray full of food and drink. No, that would have to wait, the rite of passage held off, until the elders decided the age had come. And then I was expected to play with these strange kids in a strange house in a strange town. Not always the greatest of evenings. It was a good evening if they had that football game that vibrated in order to move the players 'down field'. Remember the one that used paper for a football? I was in dire straits, however, if the only other eyes staring at me from across the table were those of a similar age girl, eating a dried beef sandwich, wondering why and when her parents decided to ruin *her* evening. Thank goodness for Charlton Heston and the Ten Commandments. Know that movie well. Besides, we always had to leave home early forcing me to miss the Wonderful World of Disney and movies such as "Herbie the Love Bug", "Benji," "The Parent Trap," or "The Apple Dumpling Gang."

I suppose being exposed to such torture did have its benefits for I have a great appreciation for music today. It wasn't always the harmony of the Gaithers echoing in our farm house. Andy Williams, The Statler Brothers, Anne Murray, Abba, and Dave and Sugar, to mention a few, spun around the turntable a few thousand times. A person begins to appreciate great lyrics, stirring melodies, and marvels how some songs can grip and stick, and others can slip and split.

One such song has gripped me again. I thank God for these unexpected times. The latest is "Healed" by Nicole Nordeman. Lately I have been intrigued how Christ can be represented in the opposites. For example, by his death we have life; by his blood, we are white as snow. He was forsaken by the Father so we might have intimacy with the Father. He suffered pain so we could experience joy. We were lost, now we are found. We were captive, now we are free. You see the picture.

The following are some lyrics from this song. I encourage you to reflect upon them and realize the grace and love of God is much about reversal.

We stutter and we stammer until You say us
A symphony of chaos until You play us
Phrases on the pages of unknown
until You read us into poetry and prose

We are kept and we are captive until You free us
Vaguely unimagined until You dream us
Aimlessly unguided until You lead us home

By Your voice, we speak
By Your strength, no longer weak

By Your wounds we are healed

Passed over and passed by until You claim us
Orphaned and abandoned until You name us
Hidden and disclosed until You expose our hearts

“But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong” (1 Corinthians 1:27).

Saved by Grace,

Pastor Mark