

### **Encouragement- You Are the Light**

In today's bulletin I'm going to tell you a story. I didn't author the story, nor do I know who its author is. This is a story that is going around on the internet and it lists the author as unknown.

*Two men, both seriously ill, occupied the same hospital room.*

*One man was allowed to sit up in his bed for an hour each afternoon to help drain the fluid from his lungs. His bed was next to the room's only window.*

*The other man had to spend all his time flat on his back.*

*The men talked for hours on end. They spoke of their wives and families, their homes, their jobs, their involvement in the military service, where they had been on vacation.*

*Every afternoon, when the man in the bed by the window could sit up, he would pass the time by describing to his roommate all the things he could see outside the window.*

*The man in the other bed began to live for those one hour periods where his world would be broadened and enlivened by all the activity and color of the world outside.*

*The window overlooked a park with a lovely lake. Ducks and swans played on the water while children sailed their model boats. Young lovers walked arm in arm amidst flowers of every color and a fine view of the city skyline could be seen in the distance. As the man by the window described all this in exquisite details, the man on the other side of the room would close his eyes and imagine this picturesque scene.*

*One warm afternoon, the man by the window described a parade passing by.*

*Although the other man could not hear the band - he could see it in his mind's eye as the gentleman by the window portrayed it with descriptive words.*

*Days, weeks and months passed.*

*One morning, the day nurse arrived to bring water for their baths only to find the lifeless body of the man by the window, who had died peacefully in his sleep.*

*She was saddened and called the hospital attendants to take the body away.*

*As soon as it seemed appropriate, the other man asked if he could be moved next to the window. The nurse was happy to make the switch, and after making sure he was comfortable, she left him alone.*

*Slowly, painfully, he propped himself up on one elbow to take his first look at the real world outside. He strained to slowly turn to look out the window besides the bed.*

*It faced a blank wall.*

*The man asked the nurse what could have compelled his deceased roommate who had described such wonderful things outside this window.*

*The nurse responded that the man was blind and could not even see the wall.*

*She said, "Perhaps he just wanted to encourage you."*

Every congregation of God's church has members who are an encouragement to the rest of the flock. They are people who shine as brightly as the Sun. They are people who glow like the light of a lighthouse guiding us into safe harbor. They are Christians who show their love for God and God's people by their actions. Everyone has aches and pains; various trials and tribulations that occur in their life. The people I am writing about at this time are those that work through their own suffering and serve the Lord with joy and happiness. These are the people we should think about when we have a little pain in our life and think about not attending worship service or Bible class. We should be encouraged by them and strive to follow in their footsteps of dedication to the Lord.

At Northwest Valley you should be able to think of several people who fit that description. Think of Ed Duncan. Ed goes through dialysis a couple times every week. This lengthy process is necessary to keep him alive. He often has spells of being physically weak. Still Ed is regularly present at Northwest Valley and he is always a pleasure to talk with.

Think of Frieda Asbury. Frieda has suffered through cancer and now is suffering with Valley Fever. Both of these diseases have caused her physical pain, weakness and suffering for long periods of time. But Frieda hasn't let these physical ailments keep her down and away from the Lord's house. Frieda is dedicated to serving God and she does so with a happiness that is hard not to notice.

Then we have the Waller Family. Ray has suffered through various medical problems and Irmgard has a broken pelvis. You would never know the pain she is going through by just seeing her. Irmgard doesn't complain and is present at worship service and Bible study. Ray and Irmgard are truly dedicated soldiers in God's army.

Let's not forget Jane Mann who suffers greatly from carpal tunnel and fibromyalgia. Jane is a joy to be around and a faithful servant of the Lord who is present at almost every gathering of the saints.

We have others at Northwest Valley that also go through daily health trials that bring them various aches and pains; Mary and Charles Bentley; Ken and Barbara Froelich and others. They still serve the Lord with joy in their hearts. As the rays of the Sun warm the earth the joy these people show in serving the Lord and being with and helping God's people is shining on us. We need to step out from under the clouds let their light beams warm our hearts. We should let their example guide us into joyful service to the Lord even when we are feeling in less than perfect health. We should let their example guide into restructuring our life so that outside things don't keep us away from service to God.

*Epilogue:*

*There is tremendous happiness in making others happy, despite our own situations.*

*Shared grief is half the sorrow, but happiness when shared, is doubled.*

*If you want to feel rich, just count all the things you have that money can't buy.*

*Today is a gift from the Lord. Tomorrow is also a gift from God through the death and resurrection of His Son Jesus Christ for our sins. Make the most of that gift by serving God and each other in love. If you truly are putting God first in your life it will be apparent in your life and in your service to Him. It will be apparent when you are striving to be present at every gathering together of God's family to worship, study His word and edify each other. As Joshua said, "As for me and for my house, we will serve the Lord." Joshua meant it; do you?*

Arne Kohl