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CD711

Storytelling

Feathers

About a month after my husband passed, I was looking for community and support, so I turned to the best reliable source and went hunting for “Christian widows support group” on Facebook. I found one and applied (yes you had to prove your widowhood). After a few days of scoping them out, I saw someone had posted something about feathers. This seemed interesting so I clicked in and read that they believed if you found white feathers it was a sign that your loved one was communicating with you...(shock, horror, disbelief, disgust...what kind of Christians are these anyway?) I promptly left the group and did whatever I had to do to make sure they wouldn't keep coming up in my feed or in my head.

Things were not easy going forward. I stayed at the church where my husband and I had served faithfully for 32 years. My role was in flux. My identity both within and without was confused. One Saturday later that summer I was vacuuming the church and talking to the Lord as I went along. So many changes had taken place and yet so many things looked the same. My eldest son had stepped into the role of pastor, but things did not feel right. He was making drastic changes, almost like he was trying to erase any visible presence of his father. I was working through traditions and preferences versus biblical truths and practices. As I completed vacuuming the sanctuary the last section left was the now completely barren pulpit area that was previously covered with pulpit furniture and various decorations. And when I say barren, I mean barren. The only thing left up there was a simple lectern and a mic stand. “Lord, am I ok? Lord,

is everything that is happening here ok? Are all these changes ok?” cried to the Lord. As I finished cleaning, I had even used the crevice attachment and was getting all the edges and corners, I turned off the machine, unplugged it and turned around...there in the middle of my thoroughly vacuumed and corners sucked clean pulpit, lay a single small white feather.

It was not there before. I know I had cleaned it well. Where did this thing come from? I do not believe in silly wives tales and superstitions! But there it was. I stooped over it, unbelieving what I was seeing, almost afraid to touch it. I picked it up and burst into tears. This cannot be right. I needed answers. My son must have thought I had finally lost it as I stormed around the corner in search of him, tears streaming down my face, holding this tiny white feather cupped in my hand. He did not have much of an answer other than to not worry about it. That was not good enough. I called my sister. “Dawn,” she said, “you’re going through some tough days, why wouldn’t God speak to you through signs and things? Don’t worry, but think of it as a gift. You asked him if you were ok...”

I was ok. More than ok. Yes, I had great loss, but God was meeting me every day through it. I’d been through tough days, but more tough days were on their way. Things did not work out well with my son. It was so bad by December that the Governing board had to fire him. And of course, he blamed me for everything and all of his problems. He left in a rage and moved away without telling me where. By May he had convinced one of his younger brothers how horrible I had been. Now it was me destroying the family. This second son called me one day. He proceeded to yell and swear at me like I had never been before in my life all defending his brother. I reminded him that during the time this happened he was not around...he was in the Army serving his first deployment to Afghanistan – he was there when his father passed, had to be brought home for the funeral, given one month’s leave, and then had to go back for four more

months. The conversation escalated to the point of abuse that I had to hang up on him. He joined his brother in alienating me.

During this time, I was at an all time low. But God was good and I was digging in. I was determined to know my God and develop my relationship with him deeper than ever. One Saturday in July I was reading in the NT and came across 2 Corinthians 10:4 “The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds.” Oh Lord, I thought, this is what I want: for me, for my children, for this church! Lord, if we only slightly understood this, just think what we could accomplish for you! I was momentarily interrupted from these thoughts as I sent my youngest son out the door for an early morning men’s breakfast at church. As I walked back to my study I saw I had a text message on my phone. It was my Army son. He wanted to know if we could go out for coffee. (I did not even know he was in the area!) “Yes!” I texted. “Good because I’m almost there,” he sent back. Within minutes he was at my door. He hung his head and I wrapped him in my arms. “Let’s go over to Starbucks and talk,” he said. So, we did. He apologized. We reconciled. I was worried about where the conversation might have led so I made backup exit plans. Plans that I now could not get out of.

But it was all good, God had heard my cry for his power to breakdown strongholds. As I drove down I95 heading to my appointment I was rejoicing! I called my mom. I called my sister. All of sudden, going down I95, in July, it seemed like I was driving through a snow squall! I was so confused what was this, why was there so much of it, why can’t I see the road well?.... I was driving through a “storm” of thousands of small downy white feathers!