DAY 17: STEPHANIE SIMPSON

"PORTRAITS OF GRACE" MAY 17, 2019

My name is Stephanie Simpson. I have been widowed for 4 ½ years. I'm a mother of 4 children ages 17-25. I have a Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education. I spent 9 years as a missionary's kid in France, 3 years in the BEAMS ministry with my husband and 12 years as a Pastor's wife. I am currently serving in my church as Sunday School teacher and church pianist.

I experienced God's saving grace at the age of seven. Little did I know then how much God's sustaining grace would be experienced in my life from that day forward. The moment we accept Christ as Savior we are not promised a life of ease. We do, however, have the promise in Hebrews 13:5b that the Lord will never leave us or forsake us. That is a promise I've learned to hold onto through the years.

As a child I experienced some rejection from peers and public school teachers because of my Christian beliefs. I had to start learning then to look to the Lord for help and strength. Teenage and college years had their own issues- separation from family, life decisions, courtships, etc. God's grace saw me through yet another phase of life.

Then came married life and motherhood. If you are a wife or mother, you know the struggles that come with the responsibilities. Out of those twenty-one years, three were spent in mission work and twelve were spent as a Pastor's wife. Those fifteen years were spent trying to encourage my husband, protect my children, share in others burdens and help in all areas of ministry I possibly could. God's grace was ever present during these years as well.

In August of 2014 I experienced something I never thought I would have to...the death of my husband. It came as a total shock to us all- complications from a kidney stone! My world was instantly shattered. Somehow through those fourteen days of waiting in the hospital for a miracle, I experienced God's grace. He gave me a peace and a strength that I knew only He could give at a time like this. 2Cor. 12: 8-10 became real in my life. Through the funeral, my Lord was there, every minute, upholding me with His strength and giving oh such sweet peace.

It's been almost five years now since Jeff's passing. There have been so many challenges with finances, being a single mom, experiencing loneliness and just dealing with the daily struggles of life. The struggles are real and the devil wants nothing more than for me to stay defeated and throw in the towel. That's where God's grace steps in once again. I go to the scriptures and start grabbing hold of those precious promises such as 1 John 4:4 which assure me that ... "greater is he that is in you, than, he that is in the world." I must totally rely on the Lord. It is so important to maintain a daily walk with Him. It is during these precious moments alone with God that He imparts His truths and promises and renews our strength daily. It's a day by day, moment by moment communion. It involves placing complete trust in Him. He is my Father, my Husband and my Comforter. Knowing this, I should be able to rest in His strong arms and trust Him enough to handle any trial or situation that comes my way, no matter how impossible it may seem. There's nothing too big that God cannot handle. (Luke 18:27) The outcome may not always be as we had planned but it will always be how God had it planned. His ways are perfect and He knows what's best for my life and gives grace for every trial and every mile of this earthly journey. We must remember that God gets the glory in all. As the old hymn so wonderfully says, ...'his grace hath brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home."

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