

Rising above grief

By Beverly Goldsmith

Published in *The Christian Science Journal*. May, 2000, pp 36-37

Is it possible for us to rise above grief and find God's comfort and peace? Actually, it is. I had the opportunity to prove this for myself when a friend unexpectedly passed on. At the funeral there was a great deal of shock and heartbreak displayed. People were openly weeping. Although I had prayed before leaving home, the tug of anguish among the mourners was so great that I felt my self-control crumbling. So, I immediately reached out to God with all my heart.

"Dear Father," I prayed, "I know that You are with me. I am Your precious child, tenderly cared for and watched over. I won't be pulled down into a pit of misery. Your might, the might of divine Spirit, is upholding me. Heartache cannot overwhelm me. Right here, Your loving presence is comforting me."

As a result of this humble turning to God, I felt my composure returning. Continuing to pray, I realized that a heavy heart has no place in God or in His expression, which we are in reality. God is infinite, all-encompassing Love. He continuously supplies us with spiritual thoughts. Sorrow is no part of a child of God.

My feelings of gloom were being produced by the belief that I had experienced a great loss. My need was to reject such thoughts and claim my oneness with omnipotent Love. We are never separated from God, not even for an instant. We are always at one with Life and Love. This means that we are never bereft of true friendship. We are never actually alone. Divine Love is always with us, always tenderly meeting our need, always supplying us with goodness. We can never be deprived of affection and caring. In reality we companion with divine Love, and that companionship is permanent.

Yet at that moment I looked over at the casket and thought of my friend being in a cemetery chapel. I felt overwhelmed by the sadness. Everything and everyone seemed to be confirming that this person had died.

Instantly these words came loudly and clearly to thought: "Why are you looking for her here? She is not here, but is risen!" I recognized the statement as being similar to one in the Bible. After Jesus was crucified, his body was taken from the cross and laid in a sepulcher. Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and other women went there with spices and ointments. When they arrived, they found that the stone had been removed from the entrance and the tomb was now empty. As they stood wondering what had taken place, the Bible says that two men "in shining garments" appeared and asked them, "Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen" (Luke 24: 4-6).

These ringing words made me stop and ask myself if I had come to the service believing that my friend's life had really ended. Was I looking for her in the "tomb"? Was I accepting the notion that her real being, the expression of divine Life, could be buried in a material grave?

To the material senses, Jesus had died. Yet, from the standpoint of spiritual reality, the so-called physical evidence was incorrect. Jesus' real individuality had never died. When the women came to the tomb, they were believing that life is mortal and that Jesus was dead. But the Master had risen above this mortal sense of life. He had defeated the beliefs of life and intelligence in matter and emerged victorious over death.

Jesus demonstrated in the most convincing manner that Life is God, the only Life there is. He gave proof that Life is continuous, ceaseless. His glorious victory over the cross and grave confirmed that true identity, the image of Spirit, is not associated with physicality. Nor is Life manifested in the seeming birth and death of matter. Life is divine Mind. We do not actually live or die in matter. As God's likeness we are wholly spiritual, reflecting divine Life in inextinguishable, timeless being. Nothing can deprive us of Life.

At that moment, spiritual understanding pierced the sadness enveloping me. I knew that my friend's life had not ended. She was alive and well, safe in God's loving care. I had no need to grieve. In reality she was forever expressing Life. As I rejoiced in this glad fact, a bubble of happiness welled up inside me and the gloom lifted. At the conclusion of the service, I walked out into the sunshine without any trace of sorrow. The healing I experienced that day has been permanent. Never again have I been overwhelmed by thoughts of grief on similar occasions. Each time I have upheld in thought the spiritual facts of Life and have remained calm and composed.

We need not mourn the passing of those we know and love. We can yield to the transforming light of Christ, Truth, and let it lift our thought to a higher understanding of Life. As we do this, we find gladness in the glorious eternity of Life.