

A Word on Wednesday from Pastor Tonia

"Faith In the Dark" 10/18/23

*Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed,
for I am your God;
I will strengthen you, I will help you,
I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. (Isa 41:10)*

Darkness seems to creep in, taking us by surprise. Loss robs us of our joy, our determination, our desire. Grief shows itself in changes to our person, our creative soul, our actions, and reactions. We share in collective grief as we watch current events, wondering how we can find hope now, where is our faith, how can we remember God's promises, how do we continue with broken hearts in a wounded world. We wonder, "Where is God?" in all of this.

Thrust into darkness, a candle is lit, and light from the candle slowly grows, soon one can see the outline of the room. There is a window, a door, there are others, we are not alone.

Faith during times of loss, is much like a candle's light growing in the darkness. Faith is stronger than fear. It strengthens us for the journey, it renews our spirit to continue, it lifts us from the ashes of defeat, it keeps us going forward.

With faith in God, with hope in God's promises, we continue when we want to give up. We stretch ourselves to try one more time, to find one more way, to believe all will work out, this time.

Some do not trust faith. They fear failure and can't believe God actually cares and has plan. We just can't imagine things will change for us, that anything good can ever happen.

Some don't like the word hope, it's too passive, they say. But is it really? For me hope is active, it is active faith in God. Faith in His love, His presence, His faithfulness, faith God's will will be done.

Candles are lit to show our faith, our hope, our belief. Candles are lit to bring peace to the night, to show light in the darkness.

Women around the world lit Sabbath candles last Friday night for God's peace in the Holy Land. One candle in Columbus, one candle in Billings, one candle in Jerusalem, one candle in San Antonio, one in Palestine, one in Sheridan, one in Casper, one in Brussels, one candle on your table, and one on mine. Our prayers rose up to God who sees Israel and who neither slumbers nor sleeps. We prayed for a healing between the sons of Isaac and the sons of Ishmael, so they may come to peace as the sons of Abraham.

Have hope, have faith, believe, and never quit. Our faith fuels us to continue, a hopeful heart can lead us to some pretty amazing places. Let us not forget in the darkness we are not to fear, for God is with us, upholding us with His righteous right hand.

Please pray with me:

God of all hopefulness, strengthen our faith, help us to be strong and to hold on to Your promised presence and protection, knowing You neither slumber nor sleep and You hold us in Your hands. Bring peace to Your people everywhere.

Amen.