

A Piece of the Puzzle

Devotional

2020-06-26 By Pastor Sharon Tidd

I'm working on a jigsaw puzzle that depicts a sunset over the ocean. It's truly beautiful. Facing towards that glorious sunset are two empty Adirondack chairs. I love the beach -- the sand, the sound of the waves, the smell of the salt. It's all quite magical to me. And truthfully, there's no better time to be at the beach, in my opinion, than when the sun is rising or setting. That's when the water dances with the glow from the sun, creating a myriad of sparkles that catch my eye and spark great joy in me! So, of course, I'm loving this puzzle.

As I've been piecing it together I've pictured myself in one of those chairs enjoying the calm, the rest, the wonder that those sights, sounds, and smells create for me. And often, I've imagined a friend in the other chair sharing the glory of the moment; a moment that leads to deep, rich conversation. Shared moments like this can be rare, but they make life rich indeed.

I was reminded of a story told of a man who suffered serious health concerns and, as a result, lived in a long term care facility for many years. He never had any visitors. He lived a seemingly solitary, lonely life. At one point, out of concern for him, his caregiver asked him about his isolation. To his surprise, the man responded with a wide smile on his face, saying, "Oh, but I'm not alone! Jesus comes and visits me every day. He sits in that chair right there and shares such wonderful stories with me. No, I'm not alone at all!"

As I pondered that story and looked back at my puzzle I was caused to reflect on the truth that daily, Jesus comes and sits in that chair beside me too. He is the friend/family who is always available to share the glory of my sunrises and sunsets, who takes in the wonder of the waves and the sea-air with me, and who listens to the seagulls and watches them fly in the wind stirred by His breath. He shares these moments with me. I'm never alone! The One who created everything that inspires wonder in me is right beside me. And, yes, He's eager to share deep, rich conversation. He wants to hear all about my struggles. He's happy to have me vent when I'm

frustrated or worried or angry. He loves to hear my joys; and laughs at those things that make me laugh. If I need to cry ... because I'm hurting, or because I'm consumed with amazement at the beauty before me, or because I'm just overwhelmed with love ... His shoulder is there for me. He understands me so deeply. He knows what I love and what I hate because He made me!

Sadly, all too often though, I forget that He is present with me. I take in these moments of beauty and fail to recognize that the God of Glory is there beside me. I stand in awe of what He has made and fail to praise Him. Thankfully, He understands and accepts me ... as one who is growing in grace, faltering often, and needing Him even in the times when I ignore Him or forget that He is with me.

I look at that puzzle and ask myself, "What would my life be without Jesus in that other chair?" All I know is that before Him I was lost, but now I'm found; before Him I was bound, but now I'm free; before Him I was judged (and rightly so), but now I'm saved by His grace. My mind can fill that chair with lots of different people, but it's Jesus I need!

What about you? Do you know that He is in that chair right next to you, offering you His unconditional love, grace, mercy and forgiveness? Are you listening for His voice of wisdom? Are you welcoming His embrace when your tears flow? You are not alone! Jesus is there for you, just as He is for me. And His presence with us makes the puzzle that is this life on earth complete! He promised, "I am with you always!"