

WSS, Part 12

Week 5

Monday

God's Steadfast Love
The Space Between Reflections from Five Years of Widowhood

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Today's Treasure

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name! Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy, who satisfies you with good so that your youth is renewed like the eagles... The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love...for as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him!

Psalm 103:1-11

It has been five years since my pastor-husband went to be with Jesus. It has been a season of reflection for me as I reached this milestone. When I meet new people and they ask about a husband, I respond to them warmly, "Mike's in heaven and I am not." To myself, I have named this season of my life "the space between - the time between when Mike went to heaven - and the day I will worship Jesus with him there."

In this space between, I have continued to learn about God's steadfast love for me. He really does love and care for the widow. As time has progressed, my grieving has gone through various stages. In the beginning, my grief spilled over into everything I did and everyone I met. My heart hurt and my tears flowed freely. God's steadfast love met me there and held me firm. He was not surprised by my anguish, nor did He tire of me coming to Him repeatedly. Over time, the grief became more personal, more intimate, and quieter. God's steadfast love continued to hold me. Where others simply could not understand, my lament before my Heavenly Father was met with comfort and compassion. Recently, the grief has become warmer, less painful, and the memories sweet. God's steadfast love has gently brought me to this place.

When I think about how I have known and experienced God's steadfast love, the answer comes quickly. It is in worship. My pastor calls it worship in the sanctuary, in the living room, and in the closet. Worship in the sanctuary is corporate worship with my church family where every week we listen and respond in praise and prayer and in the hearing of the preached Word. My pastors are faithful to the Word and every week point us to the redemptive truths of what God through Jesus has done for us. When I see what Jesus has done for me, I understand a bit more about His steadfast love for me. There is also worship in the living room- which used to be the time Mike and I spent in the Word together – now I find others in a Bible study or small group setting that pour over His Word with me. Worship in the closet is my personal time and it is here through the reading of His Word, devotionals, and even a podcast, that I am encouraged in all the ways He shows His love to me.

Dear sister, do not neglect the means God has given you to know His great love. He will meet you in His Word. In this space between, it has become a treasure hunt for me as I look each day for ways that I see His love toward me.

In this past year, I had made the decision that I wanted something to commemorate the milestone of our 40th anniversary as well as acknowledge the fifth anniversary of Mike's death. I looked for what is called an eternity ring but could not find what I really wanted. In April I went on a tour trip to Israel with my mother-in-law and my church family. In Israel with Mike's mom, I found a ring that is a unique variation of an eternity ring! I see even these types of little connections as evidence of God's steadfast love for me in knowing my heart and meeting me in ways that comfort me.

In the Jesus Storybook Bible, there is a recurring phrase, "God's love is never stopping, never giving up, unbreakable and always forever love." The ring is my way of reminding myself that Mike and I loved each other deeply and one day we will worship the One who loves us with an always forever love - - - together!

To Think About: Where do you see and experience God's steadfast love? Should you start to search for this treasure of His steadfast love?

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank you that your steadfast love never fails, never ceases. Thank you for being with me in my darkest moment of grief and comforting me. Thank you for showing me every day in some way that your love for me is real. Help me to recognize your love even in my grief.