

Puddles of Grace
By Sharon W. Betters

Today's Treasure

As they go through the Valley of Baca they make it a place of springs; the early rain also covers it with pools.

Psalm 84:6

The journey to Zion held great danger when the pilgrims traveled through the Valley of Tears. They could not carry enough water for the entire trip. The valley was acrid and dry. Sudden downpours were their only hope in getting through the valley alive. When the rains fell, the pilgrims dug holes to capture the water. Before they moved on, they made sure the puddles were deep enough to hold water from future downpours so that those coming behind them would have water for their journey. Imagine the joy of people who could hardly speak because they ran out of water and dust covered their tongues when they happened upon one of these pools. Truly, the pilgrims ahead of them were their lifeline. The Psalmist once more gives us a roadmap for traveling heavenward.

When our son Mark and his friend Kelly were in that fatal car accident, bereaved parents ahead of us in the grief journey left "places of springs" or what we call "puddles of grace" that gave us hope. J.C. Philpot describes those puddles of grace this way:

"When David, therefore, blesses the pilgrims, he does not bless them on account of their traveling through the 'Valley of Baca;' he does not bless them for the tears that fall from their eyes, for the sorrows that fill their hearts, for the afflictions and perplexities that they are tried with; but because they make it a well. Because it is not all darkness, but there is sometimes a ray of light; because it is not all despondency, but sometimes beams of hope; because it is not all unbelief, but sometimes the actings of faith; because it is not all temptations, trials, and afflictions, but sometimes the sweet refreshings and reviving of God's gracious presence." Preached at Zoar Chapel, London, on July 28, 1846, by J. C. Philpot

Those ahead of us in the journey held out hope that no matter how dark, the light of Jesus was shining and showing us a way through the wilderness just as promised in Deuteronomy 32:10

He found him in a desert land, And in the howling waste of a wilderness;

He encircled him, He cared for him, He guarded him as the pupil of His eye.

There will be days when the journey feels impossible and we feel forgotten by the One Who promised to go with us but we read in Isaiah 41:17-18:

When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue fails for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them. I will open rivers in high places and fountains in the midst of the valleys; I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water.

And in Deuteronomy 2:7:

For the Lord your God has blessed you in all that you have done; He has known your wanderings through this great wilderness. These forty years the Lord your God has been with you; you have not lacked a thing.

One way He keeps these promises is through other people ahead of us in the journey. Just when we think we cannot go another step and we will die of thirst, we find a puddle of grace, dug out by those up ahead. Their stories give us hope that the Lord will meet our needs just as He met theirs.

Aspects of your story can become a puddle of grace for someone behind you. I can't say it any better than Lettie Cowman wrote in Streams in the Desert, December 19

Call Back

"It shall turn to you for a testimony" (Luke 21:13) KJV

Life is a steep climb, and it does the heart good to have somebody "call back" and cheerily beckon us on up the high hill. We are all climbers together, and we must help one another. This mountain climbing is serious business, but glorious. It takes strength and a steady step to find the summits. The outlook widens with the altitude. If anyone among us has found anything worth while, we ought to "call back."

If you have gone a little way ahead of me, call back—
'Twill cheer my heart and help my feet along the stony track;
And if, perchance, Faith's light is dim, because the oil is low,
Your call will guide my lagging course as wearily I go.

Call back, and tell me that He went with you into the storm;
Call back, and say He kept you when the forest's roots were torn;
That, when the heavens thunder and the earthquake shook the hill,
He bore you up and held you where the very air was still.

Oh, friend, call back, and tell me for I cannot see your face,
They say it glows with triumph, and your feet bound in the race;
But there are mists between us and my spirit eyes are dim,
And I cannot see the glory, though I long for word of Him.

But if you'll say He heard you when your prayer was but a cry,
And if you'll say He saw you through the night's sin-darkened sky
If you have gone a little way ahead, oh, friend, call back—
'Twill cheer my heart and help my feet along the stony track.

Streams in the Desert, L.B. Cowman (aka Lettie B. or Mrs. Charles W. Cowman)

How can your story become puddles of grace for those coming behind you?