

Rescued!... Recovering... Being Redeemed...

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Natasha's Tale... a Parable not yet finished

Rescued!

Being Rescued can be traumatic... pulled out of darkness, fear, and pain... carried in a stranger's arms to a new place without being consulted... moved from one place to another... then once again kenneled in fear for long hours, surrounded by strangers... then again bright lights and new smells and voices and faces... not knowing that each new place takes me one step further away from the abuse and closer to the home that is being prepared for me... knowledge comes later; now there is confusion and fear... but also a new experience of "nice"; that I don't trust yet, but Oh! I want to trust it.

__Natasha

Even though we like to deny that we have been abused or neglected, that we have been sinned upon or have become the "collateral damage" of the sin-full-ness of the human race, when we are honest about our lives we know, at some level, that "sin is real" and "sin is pervasive". When we experience, for the first time, the truth of the Cross, the reality of God's Grace, the freedom that comes from coming Home to God, that's when we can write "Rescued!" in our Diaries.

Too often, we sit down at that point, and take a deep breath, and refuse to move on. "After all, God has forgiven me and saved me and I am OK! So that's DONE. We don't have to keep harping on it, do we?" If the story stops there, the healing and the recovery don't happen. If the work stops there, we (humans) can fall into the traps of complacency, of arrogance about our own rescue, and of contempt for those who have not yet found their rescuers.

__Peggi

Recovering...

Learning to trust is hard. Every time that door opens and she leaves without me, I wonder if she will come back... and if she does, will she be happy or sad or mad to see me still here... should I try to escape my fears by leaving? Should I attack her before she has a chance to throw me against the wall? What should I do? How do I behave?

She's trying to teach me. I'm learning to give her space, and not crowd her, so she can leave when she needs to; and to trust that she will come back. I'm also learning that she needs space to open the door and let me out... learning to trust that she will open the door and let me in again. Learning to trust that she will teach me the right way to behave, and that fences and boundaries and rules and limitations are all "in order for freedom"; to be ME, as The Great One created me to be... animal, then dog, then breed, then Natasha, as well as my new identity, the one I'm trying to grow into... The Pastor's Dog.

__Natasha

It's hard work. This thing of "being in Recovery" is an every day, every event, every minute thing. Too often the phase "being in Recovery" is used exclusively about getting away from alcohol or drugs, and gives some people an opportunity to think to themselves "that's not ME, that's THEM". But as followers of Christ, in our walk of discipleship, we are always "in recovery" from the power of sin, in our lives and in our world. So every minute of every day, we need to remember that God's forgiveness of us enables us to forgive those who sin against us. And emboldens us to say, "I forgive you" to the "them" in our lives.

The road called The Faith Journey means trusting that God really does know what is best. Trusting that when God opens a door to a new experience, God will protect us. Trusting that God's fences, boundaries, rules, and limitations are intentional so that we can fully experience life the way the Creator intended for it to be. Trusting those who are on the journey with us will help us learn, help us grow, and help us live in this new, group freedom without fighting or running over each other or hurting one another. Trusting is an every day, every event, every minute thing!

__Peggi

Being Redeemed...

The Great One who created me is not through with me yet. There is a lot more for me to learn, and some things that I need to forget or move past. Maybe I'll never be completely healed... maybe I'll always remember the

pain of abuse, the sadness of betrayal, being blind-sided by incomprehensible and undeserved anger… maybe. But maybe the new folks in my life will be patient, and kind. Maybe they will surround me with the fences that protect me from predators rather than the fences that crowd me and limit me and inhibit me from being myself.

Different wounds heal at different speeds. Some scars are visible, and others are not. No one “treatment plan” works on all wounds, or on all dogs. My new owner/protector is working hard too, learning my language, and my personality, and my needs. I am learning to trust and respect her, even though we are very different. She can never be my ‘mother’, but she will be my protector, my leader, my companion, my friend, and we will go on a long walk through life together, as the Great One intended all along. I am being redeemed… the journey continues, and I am meeting more fellow travelers each day, as we walk the walk together.

__Natasha

The Westminster Shorter Catechism says “Sanctification is the work of God’s free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man (sic) after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin and live unto righteousness”. It was written in the 1600s, so you will have to forgive the archaic language. The truth it contains still resonates. That the work of God’s free grace is just that: WORK. An on-going, life-long commitment to trust God, to respect Christ’s Way, and together to lean into, learn from, and grow in the freedom that Christ offers to His disciples.

This freedom is not a license to ‘do whatever I want to do’. It does not give us permission to be abusive to others. An old Mexican saying: “my freedom ends where your nose begins”. Self-respect includes self-restraint. Christ’s freedom includes understanding that ‘they too are under God’s free grace’. Following Christ includes acceptance of those who are on the road with us, for we all are traveling the faith journey in the same direction… heading Home!

I’ve been singing my way through some old hymnbooks, and recently found one of my mother’s favorites… I remember listening to her singing it before I could understand the words… It sounded like a warm hug, like a ride in her rocking chair. Now that I know what it’s about, it sounds like a song for the journey! Written in the 1800’s, yes, it’s old. But beautiful! Maybe the choir could sing it for us someday? (hint, hint!)

__Peggi

Come, Ye Disconsolate

Come, ye disconsolate, where’er ye languish,
Come to the mercy seat, fervently kneel;
Here bring your wounded hearts, here tell your anguish;
Earth has no sorrows that heaven cannot heal.

Joy of the desolate, Light of the straying,
Hope of the penitent, fadeless and pure!
Here speaks the Comforter, tenderly saying,
‘Earth has no sorrows that heaven cannot cure’

Here see the Bread of Life; see the waters flowing
Forth from the throne of God, pure from above;
Come to the feast of love; come, ever knowing
Earth has no sorrows that heaven can’t remove.

Tune: Consolation

By Samuel Webbe (1740-1816)

Words: Thomas Moore (1779-1852)

& Thomas Hastings (1784-1872)