



Thoughts on the Journey...

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There are many times in my life as a single mother when worry and fear occupied space in my head and contributed to a number of sleepless nights. Robbing

Peter to pay Paul was a way of life in those days. Feeling as though it was me who had to keep all the balls in the air at all times was a daily concern. I could fill pages with the list of worries.

However, along the journey, I began to realize that my worries were wasted and that not one ounce of stress changed any one of those circumstances. Over time, praying replaced worry and gradually, I began to trust that the Lord was always with me taking care of our needs. Without even realizing it, I began to understand *what will be will be* and my anxieties quieted. Then came an 'a-ha!' moment when I realized how much those early experiences had formed me and brought me to a place of knowing that God is always in the mix. That moment came on the occasion of my eldest daughter's wedding.

It was about 5 p.m. on June 29, 2012, as we were gathering for the wedding rehearsal at Church of the Resurrection. The heat and humidity had been oppressive for the days before, but at least we had air-conditioning. The sky looked ominous as the dark clouds began to swallow the light and it looked like a scene from the Wizard of Oz. The winds increased to 82 MPH and, in a flash, all the electricity went out. Over 200,000 places in the Columbus area were without power, including the church and the Ministry Center where we were to have the reception. We hadn't had a chance to decorate the social hall because Vacation Bible School had just ended that evening. After several hours of hoping the electric would come on, we set aside our panic by candlelight, said some prayers, and reminded ourselves of the real significance of the day - it was the day that Jenna and Andy would profess their love before God and enter into a covenant marriage. That was the most important thing of all and *that* was going to happen with or without electricity.

Donning ourselves with camping head lamps, we turned the situation over to the Holy Spirit and spent the night preparing the social hall for our guests. At this point, we proclaimed our complete trust in God.

In Matthews gospel, Jesus is challenging his disciples to take a look at what master they are serving. He tells them they cannot serve God and serve "mammon" (wealth or riches). They will either hate one and love the other or serve one and despise the other. Jesus eloquently points out the many ways God takes care of all his creation and uses nature to demonstrate God's love. Jesus emphasizes the value that his Father places on them as his children by presenting to them the question, "If his heavenly Father feeds and clothes the birds and the fields, are you not more important than they?" He tells them not to worry about food, or clothing, or any of the trappings of this world but instead tells his disciples,

"...seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given you besides. Do not worry about tomorrow; tomorrow will take care of itself."

This salient message from Jesus in Matthews gospel speaks to us today warning us of the danger of filling our concerns with material things. His message is countercultural which challenges us to look at what we worry about and what makes us anxious. It begs us to ask these questions of ourselves: *what in our lives is competing with God for our hearts? Do we trust in God's love and care? Do we place more value on what we wear, what we drive, or what we have than we do our relationship with God?*

Which brings me back to the wedding... As blessings go, my children and I pulled together and spent the night preparing for a celebration! The bride didn't miss a beat. We laughed, shared memories, and affirmed our love for God and one another - a memory I will cherish for as long as I live. We trusted that God was in the mix and we weren't disappointed.

When our guests arrived, we could tell that hairdryers and curling irons weren't working, but they came! They came with no electricity in the heat of the day to show love and support for the bride and groom and for our family. They came to witness, to dance, to eat, and to be merry. So you see? Our tomorrow took care of itself. Praise God!