

God is good all the time

Mother's Day this year marked the 29th anniversary of my mother's death. As usual the day was bittersweet. I remembered her with a sad sense of loss, even while I rejoiced with my own two daughters, one of whom was celebrating her first as a mom. A week later we were in Ottawa for her son's baptism. We left on our journey with light and joyful hearts. Yet upon our arrival, we received word that my dad was nearing the end of his earthly journey. I made the decision to stay for the baptism, truly believing that my dad would want that. My hope was to get back in time to say goodbye. I did not. Dad went to Heaven the evening of May 18. The next few days were busy as we planned the funeral. It was a true celebration of my dad's remarkable life and testimony. However, I found times when my grief was overwhelming. I gave myself permission to mourn after years of feeling like Alzheimer's had already taken my dad away. The Sunday after the funeral we celebrated again, as I held a baby shower for my other daughter, who gave birth to our second grandson on Canada Day. That birth was not without difficulties and I spent time in a hospital waiting room, anxious to hear that all had gone well. I am pleased to report that he is home and thriving. Yes, the past few months have been challenging. Dealing with change...even happy change, brings challenges. As a result, the words of the old hymn "Abide With Me" have come to me often. "O Thou who changest not, abide with me." In our church the pastor will often say, "God is good." The people respond, "All the time." It is an important reminder. The reality is that people are more inclined to proclaim God's goodness when things are going well for them. When problems or sorrows arise they express doubt. But God does not change with the circumstances. His love endures forever. A long time ago, I made the decision to affirm God's goodness, no matter what came my way. I need His "presence every passing hour." It matters not if I am celebrating or grieving. God does not change. God is good. I trust in Him. Choosing to believe in God's goodness anchors my soul. It does not mean I am not sad at times. It does not mean that I am never confused. It simply means that even when I am full of fear I will affirm in my heart that God is good. And the more I root my life in a belief in God's unchanging goodness, the less the changes of life will weaken my faith. "Call out with joy to the Lord, all the earth. Be glad as you serve the Lord. Come before Him with songs of joy. Know that the Lord is God. It is He Who made us, and not we ourselves. We are His people and the sheep of His field. Go into His gates giving thanks and into His holy place with praise. Give thanks to Him. Honor His name. For the Lord is good. His loving-kindness lasts forever. And He is faithful to all people and to all their children-to-come." Psalm 100 (NIV)

By Reverend Barbara Moulton