

RACERUNNERS

CHRISTMAS 2004



“Kicked In the Gut and I Can’t Catch My Breath!” Putting You On Your Feet Again

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Corrie ten Boom said, “When God sends you on stony paths...He gives you strong shoes.” “If you’re kicked in the gut, He’ll help you catch your breath.” We have Mr. Peterson (The Message Bible) to thank for that “down to earth” paraphrase of the last half of Psalm 34:18. Who among us can’t relate to that kicked in the gut, knocked off your feet feeling?

This has certainly been a “kicked in the gut” kind of season for me. God has been sending Racerunners (and me) on some definite stony paths. And while I’ve had to negotiate some difficult terrain mentally, physically, spiritually, financially and emotionally, it has provided the backdrop, as usual, for many exciting and wonderful opportunities to watch God work. It has required numerous trips to the Father (shoe store, smile), but each time He has faithfully provided me with the strong shoes I needed for every stony path.

One such “stony path” involved the development of a bone infection in my lower gum that required oral surgery. I experienced a great deal of pain, a major reaction to the first two antibiotics AND my insurance company did not

“feel led” to cover the thousands of dollars it would cost. In all honesty, I began to feel sad, crushed, overwhelmed, discouraged and dismayed. Paul calls this “afflicted on every side: conflicts without, and fears within” (2 Cor. 7:5). So on this “stony path” I cried out to the Lord and He led me to Is. 57:15: “For thus says the high and exalted One Who lives forever, whose name is Holy. I dwell on a high and holy place, and also with the contrite and lowly of spirit in order to revive the spirit of the lowly, and the heart of the contrite.” The Message Bible puts it like this: “I live with the low-spirited, and spirit-crushed, and put a new spirit in them, and get them up and on their feet again.” When I read this “sharp and double-edged word” from God, He released His fuel of refreshment straight to my crushed spirit and lowly heart! It was like the next breath I took was deeper and the tension that was gripping my insides melted away. And then it hit me...that is what He meant when He said, “I’ll help you catch your breath again” (Ps. 34:18). I thought to myself, “That’s it...there they are...there are my strong shoes! The Word, His anointing, His penetrating power and His life changing presence are my strong shoes!” How encouraging it was (and is) for me that we know a God Who not only CAN touch us right where we are, but that we walk with One Who really DOES!


Last week Miss Kitty made the familiar sound she makes when she has “captured” something and wants my attention. She always waits for me to respond to these moments with admiration and amazement that she is “the Lioness of the Kingdom.” I, unaware that it was NOT her normal, stuffed-animal “prey”, didn’t readily respond. After a few more cat sounds I went to investigate and realized that she had chased and cornered a live victim...a tiny lizard. She was taunting it with her paw and spitting at it when I arrived on the scene. I instantly picked Miss Kitty up and observed with great compassion this tiny, helpless, inch-long lizard. It was “puffed up” with its mouth wide open, attempting to look as vicious as possible in an effort to hide its utter powerlessness and fear upon facing what was sure to be certain death. And maybe, just maybe, we could speculate too that it felt like it had just been “kicked in the gut.” This lizard’s only hope was that there was someone bigger and more powerful than Miss Kitty who was near and was willing and able to deliver it from its present trouble.

With great compassion I locked Miss Kitty in my bedroom, got a wash cloth and took the tiny lizard outside and put it in the grass, literally “on its feet again.” Later that night God spoke to me, “Debby, you are like that lizard. You need Someone near Who is bigger,

stronger and moved by compassion to revive your lowly spirit and aching heart when it’s crushed. You need Someone Who can help you catch your breath again. If you can have that much compassion for a lizard, how much more compassion will I have for you?” Amazing love...HOW can it be?

“Is anyone crying for help? God is listening and ready to rescue you. If your heart is broken, you’ll find God right there” (Ps. 34:17-18). Loved ones, are you crying for help? God is listening and He is standing right at the door of your circumstances, willing, able and moved with compassion to “help you catch your breath again.” Let Him “put you on your feet again” (Is. 51:15). And you can bet you’ll be wearing...strong shoes!

Selah.



“When God sends you on stony paths... He gives you strong shoes.”