

Searching for the silver lining



by *Kirsten L. Klassen*

Somehow in my life, I learned to see the silver lining. Perhaps it started when I was six years old, and I broke my arm. My brother and I were playing with some friends in their basement. I discovered an iron beam that I could just reach from one of the stairs and, holding onto it, ventured out where my feet could no longer touch. I lost my hold and fell hard on the cement floor, breaking my arm.

What I remember about this incident is the mother of the house saying to me several times, “You’re so lucky you didn’t crack your head wide open.” I can tell you I didn’t feel lucky. I felt pain.

But by the time I was 17, I had internalized this philosophy. At that age, I had a serious car accident. My friend Becky and I were in the hospital for a week. Between the two of us, we suffered several broken bones and multiple bruises. At our parents’ request, the hospital staff had allowed us to share a room.

This made it easy for us to talk about what had happened. Many times, we turned to each other and said how grateful we were that we were both alive, and that we had no permanent injuries. Although our bodies had been pretty badly injured, we would heal. This was a miracle to us. We had been given more time.

About ten years later, when my first marriage was ending, I had a hard time seeing anything positive that would come from such a wrenching experience. I cried a lot and found it difficult to sleep. Comfort came to me in a different way. For months, a song from the movie “Fiddler on the Roof,” ran through my mind. It was the song “To Life” that spoke to me:

God would like us to be joyful
Even when our hearts lie panting on the floor.
How much more can we be joyful
When there’s really something

To be joyful for?

.....
To us and our good fortune.
Be happy. Be healthy. Love life

.....
Life has a way of abusing us,
Blessing, and bruising us,
Drink *l'chayim* to life.

God's gift was life, not a certain quality of life. Even during this time, I experienced moments of unexpected and profound joy, welcome relief from the desert of despair.

Beyond the comfort of the song, many years later, the silver lining to my first divorce arrived. She was born on Oct. 7, 1996. If Rob and I had stayed together and had children, they would have been different children. I would have loved them and thought they were wondrous. But that dream is long forgotten. My real child surpasses my imagination every day.

Yet, I would not go so far as to say that every cloud has a silver lining. There are events of such tragic magnitude that proclaiming a silver lining would exhibit offensive disrespect for those who have suffered. When events of this proportion happen, they may propel us into each other's arms to share a communal grief. They may inspire us to call out to God. They may cause us to examine our relationships with those we call our enemies. They may even frighten us to look into the mirror to discern the extent of our own culpability.

Many of us may call ourselves fortunate to rarely experience the darkness of storms that threaten to destroy our bodies or spirits. For me, it is precisely this truth that stops me in my tracks when a cloud appears. It is, after all, only a cloud. Why allow it to be more? Why not be joyful? 🌧️

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Our vision is to facilitate woman-to-woman links locally and globally, through mission and fellowship within our diverse church, embracing women of different backgrounds, and encouraging mutual support, discussion, partnership, and worship.