

Hearts of Love

Tom & Debbie Tillman "to touch the world for Jesus Christ"

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Teacher, Teach Thyself

Hearts of Love is a non-profit ministry, dedicated to spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ whenever and wherever we find open doors. Our first priority is to glorify God and lead whomever possible to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Please pray for us faithfully. We need your prayer, and we appreciate it more than we could ever say. Please consider us an extension of your ministry in this world, and support us with your prayer as such.

***May God richly
bless you!***

Tom & Debbie

A few months ago, I told the sad tale of my life and death struggle with the broken washing machine and the 'knee deep,' quarter inch layer of black muck from the stopped up floor drain in the basement... how I barely escaped with my life... (well... it did seem like it at the time...)

A few days ago I would have welcomed that episode back, in place of what we found lurking on the same basement floor having sprung from the same evil drain... truly, the stuff of nightmares.

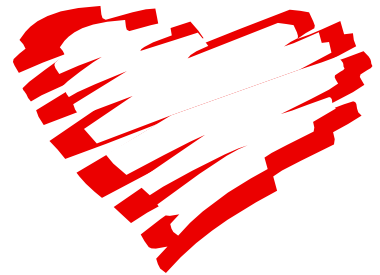
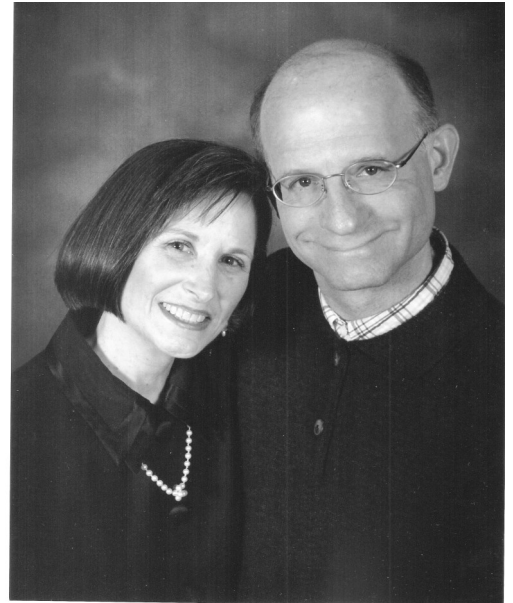
Around the drain was a 12 foot circle of the kinds of unimaginable monsters that lurch forth from within a sewer line that has been clogged for an unspecified period of time. The liquid had subsided back down the drain but what remained was ugly.

If I remember correctly, my response to the washing machine episode was less than exemplary and I questioned myself, 'Why didn't I remember to trust God... why didn't I remember that He would take me through this...?'

This time, I remembered. I felt depressed, but I quickly went upstairs, into my quiet dark place and prayed. He helped me focus, examine, plan and begin, but clean-up was only the beginning... then I had to find the right help for clearing out the drain... 100 feet from the house to the main... and 6 feet underground at the house.

The drain is running now but not fully clear... it will probably need to be replaced to the tune of several thousand dollars... that will be for a future time in the quiet, dark place.

My quiet, dark place is sitting on the rug of the bathroom floor at 4 or 5 am. I guess any place will do but that is where I begin each day. Then, 60-90 minutes later... I'm ready to enter the world, my mind and heart at rest, with God's Peace. I'm actually to the place where I look forward to



*He has committed to
us the word of
Reconciliation.*

*Therefore, we are
Ambassadors for Christ.*

2 Corinthians 5:19,20

getting up a 4:30 am for this time. (let me add: I'm not a super spiritual who sets his alarm and pops out of bed... It just happens that I always wake up at that time... weird, I know.) Sometimes during the day, like upon emerging from the basement, this particular time, I need to go back to the bathroom floor and start again.

I always begin by asking for wisdom and then thanking Him for certain important things, of which I want to be constantly reminded. I tell Him, 'Thank You for loving me. Thank You for wanting me. Thank You for choosing me and calling me and saving me and keeping me forever. Thank You for creating in me eternal life. Thank You that You have good plans for me... plans for eternity, for which You are preparing me now. Thank You that You never stop working in me to make me more and more like Jesus Christ. Thank You, Jesus, for willingly taking my sin and punishment on Yourself. Thank You for Your complete forgiveness. Thank You, Father, that You see me only in the holiness and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. Thank You, Holy Spirit that You live in me, that You guide and direct, strengthen and comfort me and encourage me... that You will be with

me forever. I need Your strength now. Thank you for Debbie, for all that You have done and are doing in her...

That goes on for a while... just because there is so much to remind myself of... to be thankful for... then I pray for people and then I pray for strength and wisdom; I ask for wisdom over and over all day long.

I heard a pastor recently recite Prov. 3:5,6... 'Trust in the Lord with all your heart, lean not unto your own understanding... in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct your path.' However, he chose to quote a poor translation... 'He will make your way smooth.' Smooth is not the meaning at all. The only time God talks about the rough places being made smooth are in reference to Jesus Christ's Second Coming... after the Tribulation, during the Millennium. God never promises to make our way smooth now. As a matter of fact, His promise to us is quite the opposite. He promised us that our way would be rough and difficult. Jesus said, 'In the world you WILL have tribulation.' John 16. James wrote, consider it all joy WHEN you encounter trials.' James 1 'But in all things we commend ourselves as ministers of God: in much

patience, in tribulations, in needs, in distresses, ⁵ in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in fastings...' 2 Cor 6. 'For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake.' Phip 1:29

Paul writes in Philippians 2:13, 'It is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure,' but His work in our lives is never about trying to make us comfortable or happy, which is proven by the very next words... 'do all things without complaining and disputing.' If God's work in our lives was about our happiness and comfort there would be no need to admonish us to do everything without complaining and disputing.

The heresy and apostasy of so much of today's Church is that God's desire for His children is that they be healthy, wealthy and happy. Consequently, when they aren't healthy, wealthy and happy, it's easy to think, '*Something must be wrong, either with me or with God. I must work harder to please God... I must do more, give more, be more...*' or, '*God doesn't love me... He can't be trusted... He has forgotten about me, I don't matter to Him.*'

God has one main purpose for me during my life on Earth before the Rapture... to make me more like the Lord Jesus Christ... to form me more and more, day by day into the image and likeness of Jesus Christ. He does this by constantly bringing trials into the lives of His children.

Another lie of the apostate Church is that God only '*allows*' trials, as if He is just some kind of neutral bystander in our lives, that He stands around waiting for chance or demons to bring bad into our lives so He can then turn it into good.

I Googled, 'God and trials.' Most of what came up had to do with God '*allowing*' trials.

God doesn't just *allow* trials... God also *causes* trials... actively working to mold us and shape us... prodding, pushing, poking, provoking... He never stops.

His desire, His plan is to teach us to suffer. Whoa! Put the brakes on... pay

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attention... I didn't say what you think I said! He doesn't **make** us suffer... He **teaches and invites us to suffer**. '...that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death...' Php 3:10

First, we have to understand what the word suffer means. By suffer, God **does not mean**... 'Ouch!! My arm has been ripped off and I am in excruciating pain!' He **does mean**... 'to put up with... to patiently endure.' That is what He is working to produce in us... patience, endurance, 'long-suffering.'

Now, certainly we must acknowledge that God also *allows* trials, beside actively causing them... as we see with Job... God allowing Satan to have a certain latitude in testing Job, but ultimately, God is in complete control of Satan also... he is only a useful tool in God's hand.

Nothing comes into our lives, nothing touches us in any way except that God causes and allows it... to believe anything else is to make God the victim of, and responder to, Satan, ourselves and chance. He is ever, actively vigilant over us... He never sleeps, He never looks away... His eye and hand is always on us.

Jesus said, 'I will never leave you or forsake you.' "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." The Holy

Spirit will never leave us... 'I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever.' John 14:16

He will always be with us... forever... through all eternity we will be in God's presence... just like we are right now. When I walked down the basement steps and saw what waited for me... He was in me and with me. When I surveyed the scene, as I planned what to do... how to remove it and clean it... He was with me and in me... He was telling me... I am here... You can do this... I will strengthen you... I will never leave you.' Even now, I have to catch myself to not worry... to not go down into the basement every few hours and check if 'it' has bubbled back up.

Worry is easy... it comes naturally. In Ph 4:8 He tells us, Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.' Worry means to go over and over in your mind about something... that's what the word means. When you have a chipped tooth and you continuously rub over the chip with your tongue... that is called, 'worrying your tooth with your tongue.' When we worry something with our minds...

we are 'setting our minds on earthly things.' That's why He commands us to 'Set your mind on the things above, not on the things of the Earth.' Col. 3:2

Now obviously, we can't be always thinking about Heaven and Eternity or we would be incapable of functioning here and now on Earth. But doing what needs doing and maneuvering through life doesn't mean that we set our minds on the things here and now. In fact, He tells us in the very next verse what to think about in order to have the peace of God ruling in our hearts... His peace that helps to guide us in making so many decisions each day. He says, 'Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things *are* pure, whatever things *are* lovely, whatever things are of good report, if *there is* any virtue and if *there is* anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.' ⁹ The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you. Ph 4:8

We will always have trials and tribulations in life until we die or He comes for us in the Rapture. We can either fight against the trials in anger and resentment or we can surrender to God's will and work in our lives... we can choose to suffer... to 'put up with' and we can learn patience. Our choice.

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The Harvest is Great, but the laborers are few. Matt 9:38

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