

A death, a flower and a new house

April has been tragic for us. My wife has lost her mum Liz and I have lost my mother in law. Our kids have lost their granny and countless other people have lost a woman whose character inspired them over many years. The funeral was only a week ago. She had been a victim of cancer and struggled with it for 2 years. One of the hardest parts to come to terms with is how much she suffered at the end and the way Liz actually died. I think three sisters all had a similar idea that in the last moments, Liz would slip peacefully away into the arms of her Heavenly Father. The way she died in reality was not like that. I won't go into details.

After Liz died Mim and her sister Roz were both in the kitchen overwhelmed not just with sadness but a lack of the presence of God. Looking after Liz was getting increasingly difficult. Cancer in the final stages both in the lung and in the brain fool a person and even a family to believe that cancer is bigger than Gods capabilities. When the death is not peaceful either, it seems logical to think that God no longer is in the picture, and if he were, what is his character that he would be involved in all this? In the kitchen, the sisters were crying in His absence and praying for God to show Himself to them.

The next day Roz's husband Ben sent them both a picture. About a year ago when Roz was over visiting Liz, Liz had bought them a Ipomoea plant (commonly called "morning glory"). Roz took it back to Bolivia and planted it. It had grown up the wall of their house in Bolivia but never flowered. Ben had just sent a photo of the first flower popping up and simply said "look what happened yesterday". The first bright blue flower had burst into life around the same time as Liz was leaving earthly life behind. Two days later and the whole bush was covered in these flowers. This moment was huge. Hope from the hopeless. Presence in the middle of overwhelming sadness. Life from death. The picture is the Christian story over again. A hope that Liz had built her life upon.



While all of this is happening, our house in Poole has been sold. The baptist union corporation been given an incredible £110,000 in investment towards a new one for us adding to the money that Hill Street have given and we have just heard that our offer has been accepted for a house in the new housing estate in Carters Quay. If all goes well, we may even be able to move in during summer. Liz knew that the money had come in before she died.

I guess it's the timing of these things that makes me wonder. For God to want to give a sign of hope to our family in the middle of tragedy, he must have begun to work on the plant months before it flowered. The right rain, the right light and the right internal workings of the poppy so that at just the right moment, his act in a garden would signal a change in a place of death. For us to get that property, it needed to stay on sale to be there at time that we had enough money to purchase it. When someone asked the estate agent how such a good property didn't have any interest for so long, he just said "I don't know"...

Well I think I do.

And if God orchestrated nature and time here in the middle of such a dark place for us how much more might he be doing that for other families, ministries, companies, societies and even whole cultures around the world? I know that we see what we choose to, but even so, could it be, that every day, millions of coincidences, flowers and houses are being given to people like us and billions of invisible actions are being constructed towards specific dates in the future when someone else might receive something similar to what we just did?

For he says,

"In the time of my favour I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you."
I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation. 2 Cor 6:2

John and Mim April 2019