

THE HEART OF GOD IV

Pumpkin Bread

She was but a kitten...

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A Place in the Wilderness

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Scripture quotations are from the
American Standard Version of the Bible (1901)
unless otherwise noted.



The man walked towards the marker in the ground. Every so often he would visit this spot. Even though it pained him to remember what was there, he felt this was his to bear. The little ones buried there deserved at least that much.

He did not really know any of them. Although he considered the birds his friends, he did not have any relationship with them apart from feeding them and caring for them. He had never met Pumpkin Bread—but her face in death was etched on his heart.

Burial

He had been slowly driving down a cul-de-sac, when he saw her lifeless body in the street. For some reason, he could not leave her there. He moved her gently, almost reverently, to the side of the road, for it would not do to have this poor creature—this little kitten—crushed again and again. She was soft and still warm—she had been

killed recently. A car or truck had run over her, and the driver had left her in the street. The anguish on her face showed it had not been a painless death.

Later, again moved by some sort of compassion and care, he went back to gather her remains for burial. He simply could not leave this kitten on the roadside. He placed her into a plastic bag he had on hand—one that was marked as having been used to store pumpkin bread. That became her name—Pumpkin Bread.

He buried her not far from his house and marked the spot with a small, engraved stone. Over time, the man buried other little creatures—creatures who had been killed as prey—around her. He felt a kind of responsibility for them all.

Why?

As he walked slowly toward the graves, God was speaking to him, illuminating his heart, helping him understand why. God had allowed that little kitten—Pumpkin Bread—to die in a certain spot at a certain time so that the man would find her. The man knew that there was no such a thing as random chance or happenstance. He knew God was trying to speak to his heart with this little kitten.

The man was still grieved about Pumpkin Bread and the various birds buried around her. There were Big Red and Little Prey. And there was Friend, whose life he had ended in an act of mercy. He was deeply moved by the death of all these little creatures, who were virtually helpless in a world gone awry.

The man felt he bore the responsibility for all of these little ones. It was not that he had done the evil that had befallen them. He would not have harmed any one of them. Their lives were too precious. But God had allowed their deaths to touch his heart, to help him see and realize what God Himself was experiencing. To bring him closer to God and into God's heart. There was no other way.

This grieved the man. He remembered the look of agony on the face of Pumpkin Bread in her death. It was not simply that she had died, but that her death was with such suffering. The man somehow bore what seemed to him to be unbearable. In reality, she had died for him.

A Man of Sorrows

Isaiah the prophet speaks¹ of Jesus as a man of sorrows, one who is acquainted with grief. Some may suppose this refers to Christ in His crucifixion. However, that is not the case. Christ offered Himself up willingly.² He had the authority to lay down His life, and the authority to take it up again. While he was deeply troubled shortly before His crucifixion by what was about to befall Him, this was not the sorrow and grief about which Isaiah spoke.

The Lord is sorrowful about the suffering through which men are passing. He was deeply moved by the suffering of others, and with an open and enlarged heart welcomed all who came to Him, sharing willingly of their distresses. His great sorrow was that so many people suffered even unto death without ever realizing and experiencing the strength, encouragement, and hope of the divine Being. He was pouring Himself out to man, yet so many rejected His offer.

This man, Jesus, grieved not about Himself, but about the many souls who were lost—the many people who destroyed themselves by living a life of

¹ Is. 53:3

² Jn. 10:18

lust, greed, and debauchery. How Jesus grieved for each one of these souls, only God himself knows.

But Jesus sorrows not only for man, but for the whole creation. As He beheld, and as He beholds the suffering of His creation, His heart is filled with a sorrow that only God can bear. He bore the suffering and agonized death of Pumpkin Bread. He bears the suffering and death of all creatures. Truly, He is a man of sorrows, deeply touched by His creation as it is torn apart by the evil one and his evil followers.

Turning our Backs

Concerning Jesus, Isaiah speaks¹ more fully: *He was despised, and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and as one from whom men hide their face he was despised; and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.*

This does not refer simply to Christ's crucifixion. It is certainly true that while He hung upon the cross, the Lord was mocked by many. He was despised and rejected then. But what about at this current time?

¹ Is. 53:3–4

The Lord is still suffering with and for His creation. Although He makes no show of this, nor does He speak of it, nevertheless He is still a man of sorrows. When He comes in this way—as a man of sorrows—who among us companions with Him, sharing His sorrow? Or, who hides their face from Him, turning their back to Him?

In His suffering, He needs some to share His experience. He looks for some who will not turn from Him. He desires a few who are close to Him, close to His heart, who will assuage His grief and sorrow by sharing it with him, by bearing—at least in very small part—some of what He has borne for only He knows how long.

Realization

The man wept as he saw the heart of the man Jesus, the heart of God Himself. How many times had his Lord come to him being Himself in need of a companion to share the Lord's burden, and the man had turned away, being unwilling to be immersed in his Lord's sorrow and grief. The man saw his own hard heart, a heart that had rejected his Lord in need. How unfeeling and insensitive the man had been.

Sharing

It had taken the death of the helpless Pumpkin Bread and so many other defenseless creatures to finally touch and soften that hardened part of the man's heart. God in His mercy, wisdom, and longing brought about the perfect circumstances to unveil and touch the man's heart. Indeed, Pumpkin Bread *had* died for him so that he could be brought into the heart of God in the deeper and fuller way. The man's own hard heart had required the death of a helpless one to finally touch it. How hard his heart was.

The man had never dreamed of this. He had known the Christian life was one of difficulty and suffering. However, he had also understood that in such a life, there was an unspeakable joy in those trying experiences. And, he had to some degree experienced such a life. But he had never realized that he was being called to share a kind of deep heart agony that seemed inconsolable.

Yet, the man would have it no other way. Even though what he shared with God was seemingly overwhelming, *he would have it no other way*. To share God's heart—to share his Lord's heart—was immeasurably valuable.

The Reason

What is the reason for all these things? To bring him and so many other believers into the depth of God's heart. God wants us to share all that He is, even that which causes sorrow, and the man Jesus brings God's heart to us and us into God.

What the future holds only God knows, but if He is willing to bear such agonies for that future, then that future must be unspeakably wonderful.

Another

The man considered these things as he drove. As he did, he passed a lifeless form on the street, which looked all too familiar to him. He stopped and walked to the body. It was soft and still warm—it had been killed recently. The cat had been severely injured, and no doubt had died from those wounds. Evidently, a car had hit it, similar to what had happened to Pumpkin Bread. The driver of that car had then abandoned it in the road.

The man picked up the little creature and placed it gently in his car. Once he returned home, he would bury it beside Pumpkin Bread. The man was deeply moved: once again he saw God's hand in His arrangement. He spoke to his Lord seeking to

understand, wanting to know, looking for the end of all these terrible things.

The man searched for a name for this cat. Nothing worthy came to mind; only the man's nearly overpowering sadness was before him. So, he decided to name him just that: Sadness.

Burial

The man approached Pumpkin Bread's grave. He found a suitable spot and started to dig. The ground was rocky, incredibly so. As he dug with difficulty, he thought the ground was apropos, reflecting his own stony heart, which had been so hard and unfeeling toward the Lord for so long. Eventually, he finished. He placed the dead creature into the ground with sorrow. He used the many stones he had unearthed to cover it, to protect it from predators. He then covered those with dirt, and finally, placed a large capstone on top, intending to replace that with a stone marker, once he could have it made.

Struggling

For some time, the man fought back tears as he reflected upon his experience. He was repeatedly

tempted to dismiss the whole thing as just a cat, dead in the road. However, he also repeatedly rejected the temptation. Following that temptation would lead to more hardness of heart, and he refused to go there.

Comfort

Some verses from the Bible came to him. He recalled the first chapter of 2 Corinthians, where the apostle spoke of God as the Father of compassions and God of all comfort. God was working to console him. It was not that the sorrow would disappear, but that in the midst of it, he would find meaning, purpose, and something of immense value.

He considered the apostle's word¹ to the Romans, that the entire creation was groaning and travailing. The apostle must have seen what the man was seeing, and experienced what the man was experiencing. But the apostle had seen something more. Yes, it was true that the creation was subjected to vanity, to corruption, to decay. But, in the midst of all that, there was a birth—a birth of something simply indescribable. In the midst of all that agony and travail, the sons of God were being

¹ Rom. 8:22

formed and, eventually, born. In their birth, the glory of God would be manifested, and that glory would free the whole creation from the bondage of corruption under which it was now held.

Freed

God subjected the creation to man, giving him dominion.¹ The evil one had usurped man, deceiving, misleading, deluding, and enslaving man. With that enslavement and bondage of man, the entire creation was brought under bondage due to its subjection to man. And so, the key to all God was doing lay in man. As man went, so went the creation.

Satan sees this, and consequently has been doing everything conceivable to keep man under this bondage. What we see today is a creation in bondage to the evil one, suffering from his murderous, malicious, mean, and vile heart.

However, God has also been working, and what God does is eternal—it cannot be undone. So, through all that Christ is and has accomplished, God is producing His many children, befitting who and how He is: the replication of His only begotten Son.

¹ Gen. 1:26

As these are born, Satan is cast down. His hold on the creation is ended. The glory of God is manifest through His many sons, and this glory frees the creation from the bondage it is now under.

A New Creation

The man considered the last two chapters of the Bible. There, the New Jerusalem¹ is seen. This city—no doubt composed of all of God's redeemed throughout all the ages—is transparent,² shining with the glory of God.³ This city stands in the midst of a new heaven and new Earth in which righteousness dwells.⁴ There, death is no more.⁵ Life flourishes and is abundant. The universe becomes one of life and light, enlightened by God shining through His many sons.

Of that future, it is said that God will wipe away every tear from the eyes of His sons.⁶ It is not

¹ Rev. 21:2–22:5

² Rev. 21:18, 21

³ Rev. 21:11

⁴ 2 Pet. 3:13

⁵ Rev. 20:14

⁶ Rev. 7:17

only that His sons weep for the suffering they have passed through; the sons weep also, and perhaps more so, for the sufferings the creation has gone through on their behalf. God's sons may weep and mourn now, but they will laugh¹ and be comforted,² rejoice, and praise³ the God who, in the midst of evil, sadness, grief, and death, has brought forth eternal good, righteousness, life, light, joy, and thankfulness.



The man reconsidered the name of the little creature he was burying: He decided to call him Hope.

¹ Luke 6:21

² Matt. 5:4

³ Rev. 7:9–10