

HIS MERCIES ARE NEW EVERY MORNING

On September 10th a crushing sadness crept into my brain and pitched a tent. In exactly one month I would be forced to acknowledge the one-year anniversary of the death of my oldest son. I could stop neither the sadness nor the thirty sunrises I dreaded.

One year. His 22nd birthday, Thanksgiving, winter, Christmas, a new date to get in the habit of writing on my checks, Easter, Spring, family birthdays and gatherings, Jacob home for the Summer, vacation, fireworks, visits to his gravesite, Fall. It hardly seems possible we have lived a solid year without him.

I think about him all the time, of course. It's odd to realize that he is rejoicing when we are so sad. To picture his spirit while we are still trapped in bodies. To fathom that he is never lied to, never gets angry, never says something he regrets, never gets too hot or too cold, never cries, never sings off-key, never even misses us. It's strange to think it took death to make him well. Oh Jordan! We rejoice in your ecstatic gain even as we mourn our grievous loss.

But God is good! Just days before the 10th, we had a leak in the old galvanized pipes in the hall bathroom that my usually handy husband was unable to fix. After frantic calls to several plumbers for opinions and estimates and were told that not only was it impossible to do a legal repair, but each emphatically suggested that we re-plumb the entire house! Oh joy! My instant response, of course, was to worship the Lord! (This is a lie.) What a great distraction from my grief! Not only that, but I had an potentially alarming medical report and the only time they could get me in to see a specialist was, you guessed it, on the 10th! Who but God could have orchestrated all that, I ask? I can't wait to see what He has planned for next year! (This is another lie.)

We were without a drop of water for over five days. Normal people would have moved into a hotel, or at the very least, inconvenienced the in-laws. But not us. We essentially camped out in our own house. Our neighbor loaned us a five-gallon jug that we filled from her garden hose and used to fill the toilet tanks, brush our teeth, wash our hands, boil to wash dishes, etc. It was *so* much fun! (This is also a lie.)

For laundry and showers we went to my in-laws every night. This was a huge disruption to my normal routine as I usually shower every morning after my workout. It's the way I gather my thoughts and plan the day. With the disruption in this highly entrenched and therapeutic routine, I found myself aimless and confused. Of course, part of that might have been due to the fact that strange men were traipsing through my house with dirty boots, a truck load of power tools, large spools of plastic pipe and laughing a spine-tingling, "heh-heh-heh" as they ripped off the wainscoting in the kitchen, drilled huge holes in the plaster walls, and created enough dust to make you think they were mining for coal. If I ever thought my house was dirty before I can comfort myself with the knowledge that it was virtually sterile by comparison.

As if all that weren't bad enough, while I was wallowing in woe I received an e-mail from a friend that essentially summed up the idea that we are to be thankful, *very* thankful, for the things we easily take for granted. Like knowing our spouse is home with us and not out with someone else; a complaining teenager because it means she is not out on the streets; clothes that are a little too snug because it means I have enough to eat;

taxes to pay because it means I have a job; a mess after a party because it means I have friends. Even big household repairs because it means I have a home. It really shot me through the heart. I was so busy grieving and feeling overwhelmed and frustrated with my house torn apart that I forgot to be thankful for all that I *do* have. I apologized to God and promised to, “*enter into His gates with thanksgiving and into His courts with praise,*” regardless of my circumstances. Truly, I am blessed beyond measure. I needed a major perspective shift and God was gracious enough to provide it through a computer I hardly know how to use. Now if I could just get an e-mail from Jordan...