

The Good Old Days

As I was taking the ornaments off the tree, I noticed that one had broken. Probably bumped when I was turning the lights on and off. It had a hole in the top and wasn't shattered. I looked at it and it was dated 1974. I thought about that year and while I have no definitive memories, I know that our children were 11 and 13 and that I had been working at the Red Cross for a month. We were happy, it was a good Christmas, and I thought about the things that we did not know were before us, my husband would be hit while walking the dog and his injuries while not life threatening would be severe. He would be in a wheelchair then crutches and unable to work for 3 months. We would have the joy and challenges of two teenagers. Our son would have back surgery and be laid up for a while and then twice more. Our daughter would go to college and get married to a wonderful man and they would begin their journey together. I would have breast cancer and undergo chemo. Our Son would be married to a wonderful woman and another celebration of love and another family begun. Life would go on with grandchildren, there would be travels and much joy but also sorrow as we lost family members and friends. We had so many more Christmases before us, 45, and a lot of joy. What if I had known in 1974 what was ahead? Would I have held loved ones a little closer, a little harder? Would I have appreciated the good days a little more? Would I have not become irate over the dumb things that didn't matter? My husband is gone, and Christmas has been strange. I looked at that ornament and felt sad but then I remembered all the blessings we had received in those years and children grown a son-in-law and daughter-in-law added and grandchildren and great grandchildren and I thanked God for the blessings and the joy and love given and received and for the plans he had for us.

Jeremiah 29:11 For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.

Lord, we look back and see when you were with us, give us faith to know you are here in the present even on those days when we feel alone. Be with those who are ill and those who grieve. Be with those who are frightened, may they know they are not alone, that you do not leave us. Be with our Pastor, bless his ministry and watch over him and his family. Be with our staff and leaders, bless them and guide them. Be with our church as we are separated by the pandemic, May it only draw us closer. May we remember that the church isn't a building but the people who gather together. We are going through difficult times Lord, give us strength for the day and hope for tomorrow. In Jesus name, Amen

Grace Epperson