

The Tossings of Life

Eventually the circumstances of life will toss you right over the edge of all that you know, forcing you to grow. You often won't be ready for it; there likely isn't going to be time to resist.

Betrayal, loss, rejection or an inability to have life as you wanted it to be...well these things toss us.

I remember when I was very small, my father taught me how to swim. Guess how? He took me and threw me out into a large pool. I was frantic and naturally started to paddle my arms and kick my legs to stay afloat. My father cheered from the sidelines, "That's it, you've got it, keep going." Are you kidding me?! I can laugh at this now – he never thought he was doing anything wrong but rather a favour. It is amazing that I still love to swim, still love the feel of water on my skin – especially a fresh water lake.

I met my husband when I was thirteen and he was fifteen. I was a city girl and he was a country boy. We met in Round Lake Centre, where my dad and mom had a trailer. Our parents somehow came to be friends and would often play cards together. All the kids would be down at the lake leaping off the dock and swimming.

One day my husband to be came down to the dock where a bunch of us were swimming. I can still see him there: blonde hair, blue eyes, ruddy cheeks, dressed in a white t-shirt and jeans that sported Canadian flags on the bell-bottoms. I invited him to come in and swim with us. How shy he looked. I'm pretty sure he was blushing before I finished my invite. He bowed his head slightly and said, "Well, I have my clothes on." I said, "So what, jump in anyway!" And he did. I think that is the moment I fell in love with him, as much as a thirteen-year-old could.

The next summer, we re-united in May, the beginning of another season of camping. We went out on the dock and I had an impish desire to push Randy into the lake. Just as I went to push him off, he grabbed my arms and pulled me in with him! It was freezing cold but we laughed and laughed.

We have been forty-three years married. Life has tossed us quite a bit. Sometimes we thought we might drown because the particular suffering was so unfamiliar and so powerful. Sometimes we have had to jump in when we felt unprepared and not "dressed" in a way that would make it easier. Other times we have tried to push the other in but hey, when you are married, you are in it together so you have to learn how to hold onto each other and let God hold on to both of you.

As hard as these times have been, I can tell you that when life tosses you into the kind of pain that leads to growth, you are tossed into God's great grace. It sure doesn't feel like that right away, but as you journey through it, you begin to realize the undergirding of grace in its many surprising expressions.

If life has tossed you somehow, may you know grace under you, strong and sufficient, able to keep you afloat...and to lead you to growth you couldn't have imagined. Believe that God's arms are tightly around you. You will make it.