

Beauty from Tattered Lives

■ by Kathy Konrath, MA, LCPC, LMHC

“My life is a mess.” “I’m too far gone for any good to come out of this.” “I might as well end it all.”

If you can relate to any of these thoughts, you might find hope in the following story. It’s called “The Quilt” (adapted; Author unknown).



As I faced my Maker at the last judgment, I knelt before the Lord along with all the other souls. Before each one of us laid our lives, like the squares of a quilt, in many piles. An angel sat before each of us, sewing our quilt squares together into a tapestry that was our life.

As my angel took each piece of cloth from my pile, I noticed how ragged and empty each of my squares was. They were filled with giant holes. Each square was labeled with a part of my life that had been difficult, the challenges and temptations I was faced with in everyday life. I saw mistakes, regrets, and hardships that I endured – these were the largest holes of all.

I glanced around me. Other people seemed to have beautiful patches. Other than a tiny hole here and there, their tapestries were filled with rich color and the bright hues of worldly fortune and esteem. I gazed upon my own life and was disheartened. My angel was sewing the ragged pieces of cloth together, threadbare and empty, like binding air.

Finally the time came when each life was to be displayed, held up to the light, the scrutiny of truth. The others rose, each in turn, holding up their tapestries. Their lives had been so full.

My angel looked upon me, and nodded for me to rise. My gaze dropped to the ground in shame. My life was not much to speak of. I had love in my life, and laughter. But there had also been trials of illness and death; mistakes and false accusations that took from me my world as I knew it. I had to start over many times. I often struggled with the temptation to quit, only to somehow muster the strength to pick up and keep going. I spent many nights on my knees in prayer, asking for help and guidance. My life was a mess most of the time, and now I was handing over evidence to prove it. I had to face the truth. My life was what it was, and I had to accept it as such.

I rose and slowly lifted the combined squares of my life to the light. An awe-filled gasp filled the air. I gazed around at the others who stared at me with wide eyes. Then, I looked upon the tapestry before me.

Light flooded the many holes, creating an image, the face of Christ. Then our Lord stood before me. With warmth and love in His eyes, He said, “Every time you gave your life over to Me, it became My life, My hardships, and My struggles. Each point of light in your life is when you stepped aside and let Me shine through, until there was more of Me than there was of you.”

Hold up your brokenness to God and see what becomes of it.

This story speaks to the hope that God has a plan for us. It reflects the hope that Christ can take my mistakes, my deliberate (at times rebellious) sin, my pride and my “missing the mark” attempts, and somehow make it work. The beauty of a pained life and troubled heart can be seen when it is held up to the true Light which is Jesus. God promises to use “all things together for the good of those who love Him and are called according to His purpose” (Romans 8:28). The phrase “all things together” conjures up the image of a seamstress sewing pieces together. God, like a master seamstress, can make it work. I love tapestries. But I would probably toss out one that was threadbare and worn. What good can come from a bunch of ripped rags? Unless...there was something to be seen through the rips and tears. There is only one way to find out. Hold up your brokenness to God and see what becomes of it. There is a light that might shine through it which would otherwise be swallowed up by an image of perfection. The next time you become aware of the ripped and tattered pieces of you, hold it up to the Light (John 8:12).

May all our quilts be threadbare and worn, allowing Christ to shine through. ■



Kathy Konrath, MA, is a Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor (IL) and Licensed Mental Health Counselor (IN). She sees clients in our Evergreen Park, IL and Schererville, IN locations.

Article taken from the May | Jun 2016 issue of *PRESSING ON*, a Publication of Chicago Christian Counseling Center
Chicago Christian Counseling Center has locations throughout Chicagoland and Northwest Indiana

www.chicagochristiancounseling.org

800.361.6880 | info@chicagochristiancounseling.org

facebook.com/ChicagoChristianCounseling | Text CCC to 22828 to join our email list

Promoting health and wholeness through professional counseling, consultation and education from a Christian perspective.