

Releasing a Dying Loved One Into God's Hands

"Momma, I don't want grandpa to die, but I know he will feel so much better in heaven."

My sweet 12 year old son uttered those words as we sat in an Urgent Care waiting to see the doctor for the two of us, and while my father lay in a hospital bed waiting for word from his doctor.

Today we found out that those words were not the ones we hoped to hear. Those words included "hospice." Earlier in the week I had said that word, but it was in a hopeful sentence, "At least they haven't mentioned hospice."

Now they have and I don't know what to do with that word. It strikes a pain in my chest I can hardly bear. It brings me to tears just thinking of my dear father facing death so imminently.

My daddy accepted the Lord about 10 years ago, but has not truly grasped what it means to him. Oh that he could grasp grace and not let go of it. It breaks my heart in more pieces than I can say that he hasn't. I can see the fear and anxiety etched on his beloved gaunt face. I can hear it in his frustrated, angry words.

We have all talked with my dad. Friends have too. We've tried to encourage him in his faith, but it's hard when death is staring back so relentlessly. I long for my Dad to see life instead of death...Life!

I've dealt with a lot of pain and sorrow since my family fell apart 4 years ago. There is a large part of my heart that is already in heaven. I want to be there so badly I can taste it sometimes. I understand Paul's statement, "To live is Christ, to die is gain." (Philippians 1:21) But I am not faced with my death coming soon...at least that I know of. I pray that my

hope would not waver in the end.

My daddy's hope is wavering...it's wobbling all over the place. I wish I knew exactly the right words so he could really grasp that peace which passes all understanding to guard his heart and his mind in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:6-7), but once again, God is reminding me that I'm not the one in charge.

God loves my dad so very much. He doesn't want this man to die hopelessly, but rather with hope of eternal glory...of all the wonder that is heaven blissfully beckoning.

We all selfishly want healing or even partial healing so that my dad will be around longer. But like my little boy said, why would I want to have my dad suffer another day when he could know true and complete healing in heaven? I know the answer but I can't bring myself to write it because I want my dad around. I want my children to know their grandpa even better...I want him to tell stories we haven't heard or even ones we have. I want more time with him.

Tomorrow I will head back down to see my dad...to spend the day with him while things beep and swish around us and nurses come in and out and in and out and in out, and he tries to rest amid it all. I will pray for the opportunity to encourage and bless my dad...and I will pray for peace for him and for all of us...and I will hope in the Lord for my dad's eternal inheritance and mine as well.

Sue Birdseye is an author and single mom of five kids that range from 4-years-old to 17-years-old. Her book, *When Happily Ever After Shatters* (Tyndale House) is in bookstores. This is adapted from her blog,