

It's Important How You End This Year!

"God, where are you in this storm? I can't feel you! I can't see you! My tears have become my food day and night. My heart has been shattered with pain, loss, and disappointment. I am crushed beyond what I can bear! What will life be like now for me? What will I do? Where will I go? Who will I become?"

In my own heart, I have said those words, have you? I mean, each week, we come to church, we preach, we sing, we worship, yet there is a pain that stings the soul, and it feels like God is far away.

The other night I went to a conference that was being held at my church. I stood there, carrying secret grief (that only God knew about), trying to pour my heart out to God. I love to worship. Worship is where I can FEEL Him! Then, suddenly, I saw from the corner of my eye, this woman who fell on her knees in worship, and she wept out loud. I could see clearly that this was extravagant worship birthed out of excessive pain. This worship was costly!

She threw off her shoes and fell on her face in worship. Then I saw her daughter who had a voice of an angel, standing with her crutches, singing in a microphone the utterances of heaven. In the spirit, I could see Jesus singing over her and in return, she responded by singing over Him. It was beautiful. However, I could see pain.

At the tender age of two, Kayla Evans was crushed between two cars which resulted in partial paralysis in one leg and complete paralysis in the other, a severely broken pelvis, and multiple ruptured organs. Despite a combined 30 months of hospital stays and 25 surgeries over the past 28 years she

continued to love God, worship Him and let Him build her life from the pain and suffering. But how? Later on, I had the opportunity to interview her and her mom on my podcast to see HOW they made it through the years of the same storm.

I was so inspired by her life verse in **2 Corinthians 12:10** *So for the sake of Christ, I am well pleased and take pleasure in infirmities, insults, hardships, persecutions, perplexities and distresses; for when I am weak in human strength, then am I truly am strong and ABLE, (not disabled) but powerful in divine strength.*

Have you ever felt “disabled” with storm that you are going through? I know I have! But God sent his sweet daughter to show me that pain will push you closer to His heart, if you allow it. As I am pinning these words, I feel the warmth of the Holy Spirit soothing the aching in my soul.

I feel the Lord wants to tell you that it’s important how you end this year, 2022! As you approach 2023, don’t look for meaning in the number itself, or even meaning in the pain and the storm. Instead, look for Jesus, for He is our meaning!

In the middle of trials, tribulation, death, pain, crushing, suicide, disappointment, loss, accidents, abandonment, and divorce, maybe you have prayed this same prayer,

“God, where are you in this storm? I can’t feel you! I can’t see you! My tears have become my food day and night. My heart has been shattered with pain, loss and disappointment. I am crushed beyond what I can bear! What will life be like now for me? What will I do?

God is saying there is glory just around the corner! God will get the glory out of your story and your life! Keep a pure heart, keep a good attitude, and find meaning in Jesus. Then you will see HIM at work!

Take courage!

1 Peter 4:12-13 The Message

Friends, when life gets really difficult, don't jump to the conclusion that God isn't on the job. Instead, be glad that you are in the very thick of what Christ experienced. This is a spiritual refining process, with glory just around the corner.

1 Peter 5:8-11-8-11 The Message

Keep a cool head. Stay alert. The Devil is poised to pounce and would like nothing better than to catch you napping. Keep your guard up. You're not the only ones plunged into these hard times. It's the same with Christians all over the world. So, keep a firm grip on the faith. The suffering won't last forever. It won't be long before this generous God who has great plans for us in Christ—eternal and glorious plans they are! —will have you put together and on your feet for good. He gets the last word; yes, he does.

Janet Swanson is the worship pastor at CrossRoads Community Church where her husband, Cary is the Senior Pastor. Janet and Cary have been married since August 19, 1989 and have three sons (Reed, Rhett, and Ryan). Her family is her total devotion and is her greatest passion. She is the author of *One Voice* and *A Throne Room View!* She has devoted a healing and prayer CD "Near to the Broken" to those who are grieving or experiencing loss of any kind. Janet has a strong prophetic anointing, which is especially manifested as she ministers in music. She has a podcast called *One Voice Makes a Difference!* She started a campaign within the school systems to become a voice for those who have no voice, or who have lost their voice from the pain of past trauma through childhood sexual abuse. Janet offers hope and healing to those who are hurting.