

We Need and HAVE Hope: Reflections of a Grade School Teacher

by Rosanne Bibby



For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently. (Romans 8:24-25)

Often times I am blessed with learning more about life from my students than they learn from me. As I watch their lives begin to take shape with every challenge met and surpassed, I see myself and my faith walk more clearly.

Picture this: It's the first real snowfall of the season. A crunchy layer of white stretches across the expanse of our schoolyard. Glimmering in the sunlight it rests, waiting patiently for its more than eager guests to arrive.

As recess begins, some four hundred bodies pour out of every door into the wintry landscape like a river of water that can't be contained. Everywhere I turn there are smiles in snowsuits drowning in a sea of white. Some are rolling snowballs while others are channeling tunnels through the snow. Teams are being assembled to construct the sturdiest fort, while others are content making snow angels or laying perfectly still to gaze at the immense wonder of the sky.

Bring.... There goes that trusty bell signaling the end of one chapter in our day and the beginning of another.

As I begin to corral the students into their lines, I catch a glimpse of a little one still off playing in the snow with tears pouring down his cheeks. I know this child well enough to realize that it may not be easy to get his attention while under such a spell of raw emotion. Making my way over to him, I prepare for what could very well turn into a lengthy ordeal.

My first attempt to encourage him to join his class is ignored as he continues to sift through piles of white with his thin little arms. It isn't until I crouch right down to his level, address his tears and reassure him that I am here to help that he lets me in. Now sitting still in a slump of surrender, eyes piercing mine, he gently declares, "I like snow."

That's it? All this fuss for the desire to simply enjoy the moment? Then it dawns on me that he is unable to move forward from his present because he is unable to envision his future.

"I like snow too; but it will be here when we get back," I reply. It's learning time now; but there will be more recesses today. And maybe, just maybe when Mummy comes to pick you up this afternoon, she'll let you play in the snow for as long as you want if you ask her."

Almost instantly, a pink frosted smile peels across this little boy's face and in one seamless motion, he is up on his feet, darting through the crowd into the school ahead of his friends.

Our desire and need for hope can be likened unto that of a small child who can only see his current circumstance. He gets so consumed with the way things are in a given moment, inconsolable until a promise of hope has been given by someone wiser who understands his pain and can see the whole picture. Someone with inside information about what's next. Have you ever felt like that little child grasping onto hope for a better tomorrow, unable to move forward until you can see it within your reach? When we put our affairs into the hands of God, we are resting in the hope that He brings. We are trusting that He sees the full picture, knows what's best, and has a plan for what is to come. But we can never feel at peace until that simple, yet profound act of surrender occurs. God has humbled Himself so that we might know that He gets it. Yes, He knows and can feel the disappointment and pain of every hurt that

we experience. He can reach us right where we are and offer us the freedom to move forward with the promise of hope. The first step is to acknowledge our need for help and to entrust our fears and frustrations to Him. We need to lay them down at the altar, nail them to the cross and leave them there. For our promise of hope has already been fulfilled. Our promise of hope lies in Jesus.