

Day 85. I MISS YOU, MIKE MARSHALL

BY MELISSA MARSHALL



I remember a time in the past when I felt Mike's absence in a very profound way. At the time I thought the pain of his upcoming deployment to Iraq for a year was almost unbearable. Funny how life is relative.

In the days leading up any deployment, Mike worked hard to ensure everything that could be taken care of was and the list was extensive. He wanted to ensure that our daughter Katie and I were all set. I, being the proud confident wife, would always say, "I got this". By now all my fellow military spouses are smiling, nodding their heads, knowing, no matter the prep, no deployment goes according to plan. The "deployment gremlins" jump out begging to be fed after midnight, then promptly go jump in the nearest body of water and multiply. You simply deal with them and move on. You learn to lean on your friends and you learn to humbly ask God for his guidance and strength. You learn to breathe. You take it one day, one prayer and one breath at a time. Today when a Facebook memory popped up as a post from five years ago I actually smiled remembering it. I can however, assure you I did not smile when I was in the midst of it. It was one of Mike's many deployments and within the first three days eight things broke; the lawnmower, radiator on the truck, washer and dryer, ice maker, A/C, vacuum, and leaf blower. I felt totally defeated. Then God moved. Wade fixed my mower, Brad fixed the radiator, and Dan fixed the leaf blower (and a few other things), Michelle took me to lunch. One by one, everything was righted, including me.

Psalm 149:4 For the Lord takes delight in his people; he crowns the humble with victory.

It is a beautiful thing to see the grace and strength of God my Father, while leaning on him when everything in your world is breaking down. To see Him put people and circumstances in place to care for you in moments you had no idea were coming, is so comforting. Few things have humbled me more than surviving a deployment. Until now.

I have been very hesitant to compare the loss of my husband to a deployment, because he always came home. I no longer have the luxury of holding on to that truth, but can acknowledge some similarities. Over the last 5 years Mike and I have come face to face with the possibility of what is now my reality on several occasions, his many illnesses have been our constant companion. Suffice it to say, we talked about this possibility. Like a deployment, Mike went about setting things up as best he could, just in case. Insurance, reliable vehicles, a good home warranty program. I love you Mike! At the same time, my Heavenly Father was putting people and circumstance in place that would not only get me through those first mind numbing days, but will also travel this very long grief filled road by my side. One day, one prayer, one breath at a time. From random phone calls and text messages at precisely the exact moment I am losing my mind, to Facebook messages and cards that make me smile; God blesses me. I have a full calendar of people coming to visit this summer and fall. I am blessed.

My biggest blessing is my daughter Kaitlyn, who is the light of my life and has given me so much comfort and quite honestly, is the reason to want to live. I am blessed. By the way, I now know, there is a difference between wanting to live, wanting to die, and not caring. Through all this, I have never wanted to die, but I've had moments when I didn't care, but God provided. I am blessed.

Five years ago when I needed help, God provided and the broken things were fixed. He carried me through many deployments and He will carry me through this. I know things are going to break along the way. The good news, He already has the people and circumstance in place to fix them, to fix my brokenness. Psalm 25:9 says, "He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them his way" (NIV). Behind my shield of faith, I kneel.

I love you Mike, "I got this", because God's got me.