

County-Wide Chaplaincy

Thanks you!

October 2023

Squeeze

Just this morning we were reading in Oswald Chambers book titled, "My Utmost For His Highest". One line really stood out to me, especially in this season of grape harvest. We have these green table grapes on our property that are so yummy when they are at perfect ripeness. You literally squeeze the sweetness of those grapes into your mouth and it is delightful. Along those lines, Oswald said that God's purpose is not simply to make us plump grapes, but to make us grapes so that He can squeeze the sweetness out of us. He goes on to say that our spiritual life cannot be measured by success as the world measures it, but only by what God pours through us — and we cannot measure that at all. Wow, what a powerful word picture!

I am sure all of us can relate to that feeling of being squeezed, so to speak. Normally it is not a feeling we relish, as we maybe speak of being squeezed financially or emotionally or even physically. It is more of a feeling of overwhelm or overdone. This new word picture however, offers a new way to look at that feeling of being squeezed. Is our loving God allowing that squeeze so that we may pour out that goodness He has given us onto others? This also makes me think of our chaplains. I am sure there are many days they feel squeezed, emotionally and physically. There are days with multiple calls and really tough situations, but that "squeeze" allows them to pour out love and compassion and truly be a conduit of God's love for hurting people.

2 Corinthians 4:8-9 says, "we are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed."

2 Corinthians 1:3-4 "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God."

We serve a Mighty God and this is such a great reminder that when we feel that "squeeze" we will prevail and we can allow that squeeze to produce a fruit of the vine, so to speak. The fruit of the Spirit includes love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. This feels like a tall order some days as life makes us want to give in to sadness, hopelessness and fear.

Somehow this word picture of the squeeze of the grape helps me flip the script. It gives me courage and fortitude to take on the challenge of pouring out the goodness to others that God has so lavishly poured out on me!

As always, we are grateful for your prayer support for this ministry. It allows our chaplains to be there when it hurts and pour into the lives of the wounded in their most difficult times.

Jan Richards

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