

# MAGNOLIA MINDS: The Power of Presence

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Faler

On August 17, our oldest son Rankin won his battle with pediatric brain cancer at six years of age by running into the arms of Jesus. Since then we have been slowly adjusting to our new normal, and are charting the waters of grief and loss as a family.

God has been so gracious to our family, and I believe with all of my heart that there are lessons about His goodness and nearness that we would not have learned, had He not taken us through the furnace of affliction.

We have experienced firsthand the “peace that passes all understanding” (Philippians 4:7), and we have felt His tender hand holding ours as we “walked through the valley of the shadow of death (Psalm 23:4).”

God’s grace is sufficient to sustain us on our best days, and carry us on our worst. That statement is not something that was birthed out of intellect, but experience.

Our family has also witnessed the Church do what She does best, by loving and walking beside us during this tumultuous time. We will forever be indebted to our faith family at First

Church, Terry, as well as countless churches both near and far, many of whom we have never met. When times are at their worst, God's people are at their best.



Rankin Faler

A phrase (or some variation thereof) that is said over and over again is, "I don't have the words to say." We understand the sentiment. As Christians we want to be able to have the right words to say to someone when the rug of their life has been ripped out from under their feet.

We so deeply, as followers of Christ, want to have the right words to say to comfort one another with the same comfort that we have received from Christ (2 Corinthians 1:4), but if we are completely honest with ourselves and with each other, sometimes there are simply no words that will suffice so I hope what I'm about to say will help alleviate some of the pressure that we feel to always have the right words to say at the right time that will bring comfort to the sufferer.

*It's okay, and it's biblical, to not have the words to say. As a matter of fact, it's okay to not say anything at all and just be present.*

On the day we buried our son, there were no words that could bring comfort to our hearts. There still aren't. There are some hurts and wounds so deep and so raw that they will only be healed when we see Jesus face to face and He takes His thumb and wipes away every tear that we've ever cried. Simply being in His presence will be healing and comfort enough on that day.

As humans we are woefully inadequate, in some situations, to provide comfort to hurting hearts. We do not have what it takes to comfort, so we praise God for the comfort that the Holy Spirit can provide. We should feel the freedom to just be present, and let God do what we cannot.

A perfect example of this is found in Job 2:13. After Job's friends found him in his distress, "They sat with him on the ground seven days and seven nights, and no one spoke a word to him, for they saw that his suffering was very great."

Job's suffering was so raw, so real, and so gut wrenching that words just weren't appropriate at the time, so they were just present. It isn't until chapter four that Job's friends begin to speak, and they would have probably been much better off if they had remained silent as God rebukes them for their speech in chapter 42.

Friends it's okay to not always have the right words to say. There is so much power in just being present. In the middle of our grief, the people who made the most impact on our lives weren't the ones who had a perfect theological explanation concerning the problems of evil, pain, and suffering. The people who touched our hearts the most were the ones who sat with us, hugged us, and cried with us.

God is very good at bringing comfort. In fact, it's one of the things He does best. Let God be God. Let Him be the Great Comforter, and allow Him to bring power to your just being present.

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