

AND HE SHALL REIGN

[based on Lamentations 3:20-26]

My, what times we live in! I have been viewing the wonderful acknowledgements to Her Majesty the Queen, in Scotland, in Northern Ireland, in Wales and in England this week, culminating in the state funeral to be held tomorrow. She was the Head of State in Canada and did so many wonderful things for our country during her reign.

What wondrous tributes there were to a wonderful lady; one who was so regal, smart, witty, intelligent, intuitive, loving and kind. She had a strong Christian faith, which guided her long life of service to her Lord and Saviour.

Rooted in this Christian theocracy, the responsibilities for the entire United Kingdom, together with the other 14 countries of the Commonwealth, including Canada, a country which she loved and visited on 22 occasions during her reign, fell on her shoulders.

She also had responsibilities for, and to, her family. She had the duty of responsibility to spiritually teach her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, the importance their faith and responsibilities were, to their calling.

We stand in awe to see how one woman could spend 70 years of unstinting service for all of us. The Queen will surely be missed by her faithful subjects and all others who loved her.

The end of an era is upon us. Our beloved Queen is dead and Prince Charles has become King Charles III. So many changes demanding a re-invention on a global scale. A new monarch and monarchy. King Charles, despite the longevity of his 'wait' to be king, will have to re-invent his role, a role that is so much different...so many more responsibilities.

The whole world has just recently had to be re-invented because of the pandemic, and by necessity. And now it is being re-invented by war in the Ukraine, bringing with it tremendous worldwide economic difficulties, the loss of life, and the anguish of this senseless conflict. A greedy, selfish and protectionist ideology has consumed the minds of so many of our world leaders. We understand that protestation is a part of our world, always has been, but protest seems to be taking on a rather destructive influence now in so many countries, dividing us from that which is best for us and others.

Look at our own families. We can remember many sad times, where grief has clouded our way. My mother died at the age of 53. The memory of her passing haunts me to this day. I know, **partly** how King Charles must be feeling due to the loss of his mother.

I've experienced it in a very personal way, but the King must now embrace the enormous weight of the regal responsibility upon his shoulders, while simultaneously grieving the death of his beloved mama. I wonder if King Charles may have brought to mind the words of 2 Corinthians 5:17, "When anyone lives in Christ, the new creation has come. The old is gone! The new is here!"

I read a story recently, of a single mother who was grieving the 'loss' of her only daughter who had left home to attend University, many miles away. Seems like it should be a joyous occasion for a child to fly off into the world to learn. But it had always been *'just the two of them.'*

The intensity of her lonely grief became all consuming, and as she spiralled into deep depression, her life began to unravel. She lost her job. Her personality became such that people started avoiding her. Then, friends to the rescue!

One of her friends, who stuck with her through *'thick and thin,'* invited her to church. She hadn't attended church for many years. As she sat with her friend in the pews, she felt a tingling along her spine, and she started to look around and take notice of the building, the people, the pastor. Suddenly she felt the power of the Holy Spirit come over her, and things began to change.

She went back to school at age 48 to study theology, and entered the ministry four years later. She pulled herself up out of the depression that had consumed her. She had re-invented herself by listening to God.

I can imagine her taking comfort from that passage in Jeremiah 29:11, "I KNOW THE PLANS I HAVE FOR YOU" says the Lord. "I WANT YOU TO ENJOY SUCCESS."

We all have to 're-invent' ourselves on multiple occasions in our lifetime. A baby, at birth, has to *'re-invent'* their life after 9 months in the safety of a loving mother's womb.

A toddler's first steps – "Look what I can do now."

Going to school for the very first time, mixing with other children and learning to 'play together.'

Going off to university, or a job, away from your hometown.

Getting married, having children and watching them grow.

A marriage has come to an end by divorce or by death. Both of these bring sadness and grief. One is alone! "What do I do now?"

Losing your job and not knowing what to do.

Looking after elderly parents when they are in need.

Discovering that your parents have passed, and that you are now at the top of the family tree.

All these situations are in need of '*re-invention*' if we are to accept our new place in God's world. That's the thing though, isn't it? First, we must find God's anchor, before we are able to tackle re-invention. Isaiah 40:31 says, "But those who trust in the Lord will receive new strength. They will fly as high as eagles. They will run and not get tired. They will walk and not grow weak."

Sisters and brothers, we who strive to live in God's world every day, find it difficult, and no one will punish you if you have moments of loss of faith. Let's look at it this way. The teachings of Jesus show us ALL the tools at our disposal if we are to live a life of truth and justice, love and acceptance. 1 Peter 5:7 says it all. "Turn all your worries over to Him. He cares about you." God has a vision for your life, but maybe you are not as sure as He is. Strip away your scepticism and your doubt and re-invent your whole life under the guidance of an amazing God.

In no way do I consider myself either a life coach or a self-help guru, but Sherry & I have had occasion to re-invent ourselves in the past, and we shared our thoughts with each other and came up with a few commonalities.

First and foremost, we found it helpful to keep our focus on what was going well in our life and not where we felt we'd failed, and we weren't afraid to share with God the whole gamut of our feelings. Although frustrating, we realized we had to accept the fact that change is a slow process, and that swayed us from becoming too discouraged.

For both of us we had to come to terms with the reality that we needed to keep our bodies healthy and not just focus on mental adjustments. We made proper meal plans and endeavoured to go for a relaxing walk every day.

"Changing things up" as the saying goes was also something that we tried. We re-evaluated what **things** we actually needed, and endeavoured to display objects and photos that made us smile.

And we each reached out to supportive friends who were able to help de-clutter our emotions.

Those are just a few commonalities that we shared in our shifting life journeys, but whatever your story, please be encouraged by these words from Job 8:7, "In the past, things went well with you. But in days to come, things will get even better!"

Let us pray:

Father, give us the courage to step into the unknown of each new day, knowing that you are in control of everything.

We find safe haven in your arms, and draw strength from the wisdom of the scriptures.

We need challenges so we don't become complacent.

Help us step into the realm of re-invention knowing that your Holy Spirit is always present.

Lord, you rule over the kings of the earth, and we bow down to your infinite majesty. AMEN