

# Papa's New Body

Linda Hill

"Papa" is what we called him. He came into our lives the month before I turned 15. My middle sister was 15 the next year and our baby sister was 15 the year after that! Imagine taking on a 36-year-old widow and 3 teenage girls! He never got upset about much but us leaving the lights on.

Papa grew up during the Depression. He was a veteran of WWII and served on the front lines for five days. He suffered from frozen feet, spending the next six months in military hospitals. He was a hard worker, and he loved his church and his family.

Papa did not discuss his faith much, but he sure did demonstrate it! My son said you could set your watch by Papa's daily devotion time. At nine o'clock every evening he would turn off Fox News and get out his Bible and Open Windows and have his devotional. Papa believed in tithing, and as long as he was able, he saw that the Lord received more than ten percent. Papa had the gift of mercy. He was truly concerned about those who suffered and the lonely. He outlived many of his friends, but he would call some of them every day to make sure they were okay.

Nothing gave Papa more joy than gardening. He would come home from working in the plant, change clothes and go to the garden and work until every thread on his body was soaked. In February he started itching to break up the land. For many years, he plowed a horse named Judy but later graduated to a Troy Bilt tiller.

Papa would disc up the ground, row up the rows, and drop the seeds. Many times, he saved



seeds from his crops to plant the next year. By Good Friday he had his corn planted. Corn was usually ready by the Fourth of July. The corn plant that produced the corn on the cob was much more glorious than the corn seed that was put in the ground. Many a neighbor and widow were the recipients of Papa's tomatoes, watermelons, corn and other vegetables. He loved sharing the bounty that the Lord had blessed him with.

Jesus said that a seed must be put into the ground and die before it can bear fruit.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. (John 12:24)

Only when a seed is put into the ground does it begin to decompose, and when the shell rots away, the life inside begins to flourish and new life springs forth. From the new plant comes new seeds. Jesus was on His way to the cross and was speaking of His own death. He was able to give us everlasting life only because of His death. From this death, a new kingdom would spring forth populated by those who experienced new life in Him.

In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul spoke of our bodies as being seeds. These old bodies that we live in here on this earth will be put into the ground someday, just like Papa's 95-year-old body was. But at the resurrection, we will receive new bodies, bodies that are made to live forever. Paul said that God gives us a body as He chooses, and each kind of seed has its own body – one kind for humans, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish. There are earthly bodies and heavenly bodies, and each has its own glory.

This earthly body is not designed for the heavenly life. It is eventually planted in the ground in dishonor and in weakness as a natural body, but one day it will be raised in glory and in power as a spiritual body. This natural body bears the image of the first Adam, the man of dust. Our spiritual bodies will bear the image of the Lord Jesus Christ, the man of heaven. These flesh and blood bodies cannot inherit the kingdom of God, but Paul cried out that we shall all be changed. When the last trumpet sounds, we will be raised with bodies that will not decay and that will live forever.

But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" The sting of death is sin and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." (1 Corinthians 15:54-58)

As Papa was facing his own death, this was the last Scripture that was read to him in this life. It gave him much comfort to know that he would soon receive his new glorious body that would never perish.

*Linda is a wife, mother, and grandmother. She serves in many ways with Glimpses of Grace.*