

Love's Unending Legacy - #5 of the Love Comes Softly Series

You hear, O Lord, the desire of the afflicted; You encourage them, and You listen to their cry, defending the fatherless and the oppressed, in order that man, who is of the earth, may terrify no more. Psalm 10:17

A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in His holy dwelling. God sets the lonely in families, He leads forth the prisoners with singing; but the rebellious live in a sun-scorched land. Psalm 68:5-6

When Jesus saw the crowds He had compassion on them because they were harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd. Matthew 9:36

When Missie's husband Willie died, Missie decided to leave the west and return to her hometown. Missie's parents offered that she could live with them, but she declined saying that she needed to learn how to support herself and her son. Part of growing up is learning how to take care of ourselves. Another part of growing up is being able to recognize that there are times when we need help.

When you need help, who is there for you? Have you thanked them?

Sheriff Tyler had lost his fiancé years earlier and had turned his back on God at that time. When Missie lost her baby daughter she also turned away from her faith, but her father helped her through the difficult time. As Missie struggled to raise her son alone, she trusted that God would help her.

How do you cope with tragedy? Have there been times when you have doubted your faith?

When the church was looking for homes for orphan children, Missie didn't plan to take a child, but felt compelled to help Belinda even though she had barely established a home of her own. Missie wanted to draw Belinda into their family but Belinda was distant and distrustful. Missie treated Marty the same way when she was a child. Sometimes people turn away from others to protect themselves.

How do you protect yourself when you feel threatened?

When Belinda tried to rescue her brother from the family that adopted him and was abusing him, the two of them got lost in a storm. Sheriff Tyler's didn't know where to look and so he finally prayed, "God, I'm not sure if I even believe in you ..." God hears our prayers, even when we doubt.

Have you ever felt unsure of God's presence and His love for you?

Missie wanted to make a home for her children. She felt the best that she could offer Belinda was a blanket hung across the corner of the room and a borrowed mattress on the floor. In reality Missie was offering much more, giving Belinda a place where she was loved and accepted.

Who has made you feel loved and accepted? How do you make others feel loved and accepted?

Missy told Matty that "home is where you will always have a place." Although it is important to have a place to live, even more important are the people who love us and we love them. When we believe in God we trust that He has a good and gracious plan for our lives. Even though we encounter difficulties in life, we trust that He will protect us and watch over us.

Dear Lord we thank You for Your good and gracious love in our lives. Help us to trust in You even when we cannot feel Your presence. Show us how to give Your hope and encouragement to those who are lonely and in need. Bless and keep your people in Jesus' name, Amen.