

RITA'S AFTERMATH



Melva's Corner-Special Edition

A MOMENT TO REFLECT

September 26, 2005

Bible Text: II Corinthians 4:5-6 NLT

Central Truth: Heavenly Father and Giver of every good and perfect gift, please bless me with holy and practical wisdom so that I can more fully know how you have blessed me and so that I can be the blessing to others that you want me to be. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Like many of you, I finished the last few weeks emotionally exhausted. And at the same time heartened by the stories of people struggling heroically to help. Rita like Katrina revealed the amazing human spirit. I have kept a journal of some of the magnificent expressions of love during these two earth shaking events:

- a lone nurse in the New Orleans convention center trying to help ill and dying people trapped in squalor
- two older men who repeatedly went back into flooded streets and houses finding scores of immobile people left to die and taking them to safety



- doctors and nurses working without the basics of hygiene trying to keep alive critically ill patients
- rescue workers who went out time and time again to rescue trapped people
- law enforcement and fire officials who risked their lives to try to maintain order without back up support and few tools of communication
- National Guard troops just back from Iraq sent to help and restore order at great personal risk to themselves

The list could go on and on about those whose work has saved thousands of lives. At the same time, I also know that many of these people providing such critical care have seen and experienced horrible things and are now at the end of their emotional ropes. These courageous responders deserve the continued prayers of a grateful nation.



Yesterday, as I turned off the television set, I decided to take out my music and start a worship service — fellowship with the Master. As I listened to the joyous songs of praise it was like a gift of grace that my soul craved — they provided me with needed notes of grace. While this fellowship did not remove the suffering of hundreds of thousands of people, the music reminded me of the true Source of grace and the real reason for hope. Deep in the human spirit is a yearning to know and be known by God. When our hearts are re-tuned to His notes of grace, something restorative and hopeful happens. This is why genuine worship does something profound that nothing else can quite match.

My heart still hurts for the many evacuees ... only now that heart is also filled with assurance that God's people will respond with loving, generous, and holy kindness.

While there will always be many flaws in God's people this side of Glory, there is a refreshing grace that shines through as we sing the songs of our heavenly home while wading through the muck of

the moment to extend God's grace to those who need it most. May the words of our melody of grace always be the same even though the melody may differ each time the song is sung.

MEMORY TEXT:

We don't go around preaching about ourselves; we preach Christ Jesus, the Lord. All we say about ourselves is that we are your servants because of what Jesus has done for us. For God, who said, "Let there be light in the darkness," has made us understand that this light is the brightness of the glory of God that is seen in the face of Jesus Christ. (II Corinthians 4:5-6 NLT)