

When children come into the world, they need adults to take care of them. Adults do this willingly - especially parents, teachers and health care professionals. We all need to be needed, and no one needs us more than a child.

Josiah was the kind of kid who immediately rewarded your love for him. He had a sweet face, a pleasant disposition, a capacity to endure hardship, and a heart full of love. He made you feel that every day was a special day because he was part of it. He did not have some advantages that other children have, especially with regard to his health and the length of his life. But he did have some advantages that other children do not have, especially two parents who loved him and sacrificed for him, doing everything they possibly could to save his life. He also had a big sister who felt the same way and who actually did save his life when she donated her bone marrow to help her brother. It is sad that there are children with leukemia, but it is sadder when there are children without love. If I had to choose between living with leukemia or living without love, I think I'd choose leukemia. If you've got love, you can face any obstacle.

A tiny life can occupy a giant place in your heart. We wouldn't be feeling such sorrow today if we didn't love this little guy. It's OK to cry. Our tears signify our love. The bible has an entire book about crying. The Book of Lamentations was written for a people who had lost everything - their homes, their warriors, and the lives of their children. People had to wonder if God had totally abandoned them to love someone else. Yet somehow looking out over the devastation brought upon them, the people were able to say, "The favors of the Lord are not exhausted; his mercies are not spent.... It is good to hope in silence for the saving help of the Lord."

It takes special eyes to see that. If we dwell too much on what we've lost, we lose the vision of what we had. None of us wanted to lose Josiah, but we all feel that we are better people because he came into our lives. We only had him for about seven years, but that was better than not having him at all. The Letter to the Ephesians says that God chose us in Christ "before the foundation of the world.... In love [God] destined us for adoption to himself through Jesus Christ." We believe that God chose to make Josiah and put him into a Christian home.

We can tell God's intentions about each of us from the little story about Jesus and the children. When the disciples tried to keep kids away from Jesus, he said, "Let the children come to me; do not prevent them. The Kingdom of God belongs to such as these." Children need adults, but adults need children. Perhaps some children live their entire lives as a child in order to instruct us. Children who die young are a perfect example of what childhood is and what we all can be. We trust that God has taken innocent Josiah to himself. Now we can only pray that when God looks at us, he will find us the same way: innocent of wrongdoing, confident in the Lord, tolerant of hardship, joyful about life, and generous in love. How blessed we would be if God could look inside us and find there what he surely found inside Josiah: the heart of a child.