

When we grieve the death of someone we love our minds fill with memories. The memories are good--they remind us of joy, and the joy helps to ease the pain.

Even when we know someone is dying, it's still hard to see them go. The Woodards have lost the father of their family an age too soon. Since the past was so filled with joy, I'm sure it must be hard to imagine the future.

The Woodards remember Lloyd as a simple man of generous spirit, whose charity began at home. His wife remembers him as a man who loved her as no one else ever has before. That's a beautiful tribute to Lloyd, to marriage, and to the human spirit.

The Woodards have lived in the same house for over thirty years. They've seen the world change around them, and that must be hard, too. Any change in our life, but especially the death of someone we love, can make us feel powerless. And nobody likes that--we'd rather be in control.

St. Paul writes to the Romans about feeling powerless. In the passage we heard this morning. He says you probably wouldn't help out someone who was crooked; you might help them out if they're good. He says we're a whole race of people who sin; it's inconceivable for anyone to help us. We are at the core powerless. But, in spite of our sin, Jesus died so that we might have life. Although we have no power, the one who has all power has rescued us.

It's tempting to brood over a death like Lloyd's: What if we had detected the cancer earlier? What if we had tried something else to help him? St. Paul urges us to put away our questions, and to trust in God who has the power to raise Lloyd to new life; to trust in God who has the power to help us build a future of hope, a future where people might say of us, "They were simple, they were generous, they loved as no one else has ever loved before."