

THE TWO-FOLD SECRET OF SORROW

The threads of our lives intertwine in surprising ways. And if we begin to gently unravel them, we may discover how they tangle in common experience. Consider this letter my wife recently wrote to her niece.

I have never been through what you have recently experienced--the carrying of a child in my body whose spirit has already gone to God--so I cannot really know your sadness.

I have known many friends who have been through this, and they experienced the same emotions as if a child who had already been born had died.

I believe that, for I loved Jenny and Barrett from the seconds I was told of them.

When I went to the doctor with a friend in March 1976, we each thought we were pregnant. Sharon was, but the doctor suspected that I had miscarried the month before. I was sad, unsettled and miserable.

Seven months later Sharon gave birth to a baby girl. Along with her, I had believed her promise from God that she would have girl. So James and I had made a "lion mirror" just like Jenny's, except this one was pink and white.

Rachel Annette Yust was born on October 4, 1976, the very same day that Jenny left our home to live at the Conway Human Development Center.

Nineteen years from that very day--even to the very minute--you were at Jenny's funeral listening as I related the story of this nineteen-year span.

I think now of my baby who could have been born that day in 1976--and my almost four-year-old daughter who left home forever that day. I think of that same 22-year-old daughter (who was still only two months old in ability) who left her earthly home forever that day 19 years later.

I think of the other child who would have been Barrett's best friend, who could have influenced him for good, who could have encouraged him to love home more than anything else ... and I am sad.

I know my sadness is not the same as yours, but I do, to some extent, understand sadness. The tear that is creeping down my right cheek is for you and for me, my dear Erin.

So let us love and appreciate all we have left. I envy you what you have left: two boys who still have many years left to be hugged, to be read to and to be told about Jesus, their best Friend.

No matter how difficult the path of life, others have walked it before. And there's a purpose. According to the Bible, "[God] comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God."

Thus unfolds the two-fold secret of sorrow: first, accept the comfort God would send through others, and then funnel it to those who need comforting. Sorrows aren't for wasting on ourselves.