

The Lord Gives and the Lord Takes Away

Covenant Christian High School has been hit hard with deaths these past two years. Last year we lost a fellow student, Daniel Cammenga; then a father; then a mother; and then a sister. Now this year we lost another fellow student, Paul Noorman.

We can not help but ask why? Why did God take two young students? Why would God take parents and siblings? They were all young when they went to be with their Father in their heavenly home. Why would God give us five deaths in two years? Isn't this more than we can handle? Is God punishing us? What is God trying to tell us? So many questions swarm our minds. So many questions that we can not answer.

Job 1:21 says "...the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." God gave to us these brothers and sisters in Christ to love and cherish while they were on this earth, whether it was for 16 years or 50 years. Then God took them away, some suddenly, while others suffered the trials of sickness or disease for years.

Romans 8:38-39, "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor power, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus." During death we can feel as if God is not by us. We don't understand why God could take someone so close away from us. Everything is in God's plan, and we don't understand it all. Nothing can separate us from God's love. Even during death God loves us and is upholding us. He makes us to grow spiritually, trust and lean more on Him. God alone gives us the grace and strength that we need to make it through these difficult times.

From the deaths of two students, the student body at Covenant Christian has grown together so much. I was a junior when my fellow classmate, Daniel, was killed in an automobile accident. I remember how much our junior class, along with the rest of the school, grew spiritually, and came together. It didn't matter who was popular and who wasn't. All the different groups in school came together. These experiences made us realize what was important in our life. What is important is not how popular one is, or what things you have, but rather the family and friends that God has blessed us with, the Christian school and churches that we have, and all the blessings that God has given to us: grace, hope, forgiveness of sins, and eternal life.

When I first heard that Paul Noorman had passed away I immediately sympathized with my fellow schoolmates. The sophomores had not experienced the loss of a fellow student like we, as seniors and juniors, had the year before. Many of us headed to

Covenant as soon as we heard of Paul's death to be with the sophomores there. We cried, we comforted, recited Bible passages, and reminded each other that Paul is in a much better place. We as seniors and juniors felt the need to comfort the sophomores as best as we could.

"Help me then in every tribulation, so to trust Thy promises O Lord, that I lose not faith's sweet consolation, given me within Thy Holy Word. Help me, Lord, when toil and trouble meeting, e'er to take, as from a father's hand, one by one, the days, the moments fleeting, til I reach the promised land." This verse of *Day by Day* gives us comfort that in everything we face, God is always with us. We must trust that in everything God will give us the strength to make it through. We need to be reminded that everything is in God's hand. Nothing happens without the Father's will. Death is God's will.

Lord's Day 1, "What is thy only comfort in life and death? That I with body and soul, both in life and death, am not my own, but belong unto my faithful Savior Jesus Christ; who, with his precious blood, hath fully satisfied for all my sins, and delivered me from all the power of the devil; and so preserves me that without the will of my heavenly Father, not a hair can fall from my head; yea, that all things must be subservient to my salvation, and therefore, by his Holy Spirit, he also assures me of eternal life, and makes me sincerely willing and ready, henceforth, to live unto him." We are God's children. No matter if we are alive, or dead we are God's. Nothing happens to us without it being the will of God.

Life is fragile. Anyone can be taken from this earth at any moment. Death serves as a reminder to us that our place is not here on this earth, but in heaven. Our life here on earth is temporary, not permanent as many people would like it to be. John 14:2-3 states, "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am there ye may be also." When our place is ready for us, Christ will come and get us.

At the end of time, during Christ's second coming all the dead will be raised. I Corinthians 15:42-44, "So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body." We have the hope that when we die we will see our loved ones, our fellow classmates, fathers, mothers, and siblings, in heaven. What a joy and comfort that is for us.