

## **A Mother's lament** – by *Hannah Romaine*

I do not want what's happening here to be lost on a single person in this room. Would you just take one second and look around you, take in just how many people there are in this place. Thank you for accepting our invitation to join in our hearts cry, the encouragement your presence provides to our hearts is palpable. We are here to honor the memory of our only son, our Ian, and worship our Holy God as we travel through this valley of loss and thank him for what author Dane Ortland so adequately described as the meaningful depth and joy He has forged in our hearts on the anvil of difficulty and tears.

I have struggled this last week as I have heard others and even I myself start to refer to Ian in the past tense. But today I feel compelled by the unquestionable truth that we were created for eternity to tell you about our son in the present tense. For just as we told our daughters last Saturday, he is not here, but he "is", he continues to "be" sweet, kind, thoughtful, sensitive, generous, brave, strong, positive, beautiful, gentle, and surprisingly hilarious.

After losing everything he had Job addresses God directly and says in chapter 10, why can't you take your eyes off of me? Why won't you leave me alone long enough to swallow my own spit? You shaped me and made me; now You're grinding me into a powder. I do not presume that we have suffered as deeply as Job did, but I have felt as if God was grinding me and my family into a powder. Do you remember how God answers Job? He answers with the mystery of Himself. Have you ever in your life commanded the morning and caused the dawn to know it's place? Have you walked in the great deep? God has not given me explanations in our own sufferings but He has met us as a person saying "Trust me. Walk with me." Our suffering alongside our son and daughters has been an irreplaceable medium to know Him more deeply and trust Him more completely.

Can you see God's hand, tenderly caring for you, for me, and my family in this hurt? I can! And I cannot help but say, "He has been so good to us!" My heart echos the psalmist in saying "What can I give to the Lord for all his benefits to me? How can I thank Him for how He has lavished his love and outpoured his joy in my heart leading me to live in the tension of awe and anguish? The answer is, "I will take the cup of Salvation and call on the name of the Lord my God, Ian's God. Whatever is in the cup God is offering to me. Pain, sorrow, grief along with the many, many more joys, I am willing to take it because He is trustworthy and His faithful hand has led me all this way.

When we were a younger version of ourselves and God called us and financially equipped us through the generosity of the church to go to Spain for our first term, I was 8 months pregnant with Ian. When we were thinking about what name we would give our baby if God gave us a boy, "Ian" was the one that stuck in my heart and mind because it means "gift from God" or "God is gracious." Elisabeth Elliot once said that "If God has given us a gift it is never only for ourselves. It is always to be offered back to Him and very often it has repercussions for the life of the world. Jesus offered Himself to be the bread of the life of the world. He said the bread that He would give was His body and He gave it. For a Christian, the pattern is Jesus. What did He do? He offered Himself, a perfect and complete sacrifice for the love of God. Ian followed in those very footsteps of his Savior, through his suffering, countless are encountering God's tender love for mankind, and Ian's life was literally poured out for Him.

Oh Lord my God I miss our Son, but I accept your will and I thank you for the opportunity to trust your goodness and will continue to walk with You through this valley.