

**I guess he isn't coming back** ... it's been 4 months and 23 days. 144 days to ponder and pray and listen and reflect. 144 nights to slowly climb the stairs to an empty room and bed where the love of my life met Jesus while he slept. Bill's nearly new toothbrush is still waiting ... sometimes I'll use it instead of my own just to seem closer to him somehow. His laundry is clean and neatly folded on the ironing board in the closet we shared, but oh how grateful I was the day I found his weathered worn flannel I hadn't yet washed.

43 years ago I heard God whisper to me as clear as if He'd been sitting next to me, "There's something ... something about that Bill Miller". It struck me enough to investigate what God was putting on my heart. Bill's shy, gentle demeanor? Was that it? I felt it was deeper than that, but at that age I was looking at other things. His mouth? His smile? Or his teeth that had braces removed right before mine were put on? Was it his strong forearms and hands that knew all the various tasks involved in working on a ranch? At only 17, I was sure Bill was wiser than his years and kinder and stronger in Spirit than any boy I had ever observed. That must have been the reason for God's nudging me. And now Bill's wisdom and strength of character reside in heaven, and I remain here to carry on the legacy and family he and I and God built together.

There is so much to say about growing together as a family and ministry. Gathering the memories and pieces of a relationship that was, I have no doubt, the most incredible and blessed journey two living souls ever encountered. How do I weave into chapters the life and calling of such a man? One who was always looking out for everyone else, and teaching while completely listening and helping with every conversation he ever had. We could all learn something from Bill's impactful 59 years of life. We could all start to think more deeply about God's good plan for our lives and focus less on the stress and striving that are so prevalent today. Hardships will come. That is a given that comes straight from the Word. But we are instructed to "cheer up", and to "take heart", if we indeed KNOW the One who has overcome the world. These are truths from John 16:33. Jesus tells us these things so that in Him, we may have peace. Bill knew this, Bill taught this, and we loved and lived this truth.

Grasping the depth of this loss is overwhelming on some days. I won't debate with God why it happened. And I don't really agree with the philosophy that God TOOK Bill home. I believe God WELCOMED Bill home. We live in a counterculture world. A place of chaos where a real enemy searches out where he can devour truth and cause confusion. Our amazing sovereign God, in His plan that was formed before the foundation of the world was laid, gave us an authority few of us realize. Adam gave away that authority and Jesus bought it back for us to live a victorious life. Do we? Bill did. I am honored that God whispered those quiet words to me all those years ago. I am humbled to remember and write how He used our sometimes very difficult circumstances to build a family with such strength, and how He gave us two generations of children to raise up in the way they should go.

How will I go on doing that very thing without Bill? How many more days will I use his toothbrush instead of mine? And how many times will I ponder how God could possibly have even more planned for me than I can imagine? As many as it takes. Because I've learned to hear His voice. Because Jesus and Bill Miller taught me this ... it's not all about me. Life isn't always fair. It's about love. And telling our own testimony while recounting His love story of the ultimate sacrifice. The good news from that big book that sits on our shelf ... where what was completely unfair on the cross, was turned into redemption for any of us that will receive it and say YES to Him. I'll listen to those whispers all day long. Whether I put away his folded clothes or not is another story.