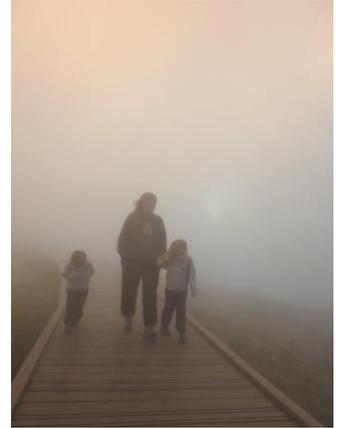


Jesus' Presence in the Clouds

One of the most difficult times to drive a car is when you are on a road surrounded by heavy fog. You can't see where you are going. If you decide to tough it out your eyes are glued to the lines painted on the surface of the road or perhaps you trust the vehicle in front of you. If you lose your bearings you are in big trouble.

Fog is a cloud that is touching the ground. There are many references in the Bible to clouds. Many passages talk about God being present in the clouds. *And then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. (Mark 13:26)*. Driving those mountain roads in a fog we certainly would like to have the Son of Man and His power seated next to us. It is a very precarious drive. He *is* there. It is during the precarious times that God shows up and sits beside us as we navigate through the clouds. Oswald Chamber wrote, "Clouds are the sorrows, sufferings, or providential circumstances ... when the Spirit of God is teaching us how to walk by faith. If there were never any clouds in our lives, we would have no faith."



We like to think that God comes to us during mountain-top experiences. We gaze at the valley below as a cloudless blue sky completes a pretty picture. We admire the beauty of God's creation at a time like that, but other than our awe of what we see, our interaction with God at that time is limited. We are impressed with the view, but really are no closer to God. On the other hand, our faith grows during the dark times of our lives when we are traveling through the clouds of sorrow, suffering and uncertainty. It is during those times that we need His power to help us through the darkness of what we face. He is there. *The Lord descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord (Exodus 34:5)*.

The clouds are a sign that God *is* there. The Bible tells us: *The clouds are the dust of His feet (Nabum 1:3)*. In a devotional about God's presence in the clouds Oswald Chamber made a surprising statement. He said, "It is not true to say that God wants to teach us something in our trials. Through every cloud He brings our way, He wants us to *unlearn* something." He wants to simplify our beliefs until our relationship is singularly between God and our own souls. When you think about it, the driver I am tempted to follow on the foggy, mountain road is as visually impaired as I am. Other than the fact that he hasn't gone off the road yet, he is as desperate and scared as I am. Other people may try to help but they don't have the perfect answer to solve my problems for me – only God has. *Then a cloud appeared and covered them, and a voice came from the cloud: "This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!" Suddenly, when they looked around, they no longer saw anyone with them except Jesus (Mark 9:7-8)*.

We all will face times in our lives when the dark clouds of sorrow, bereavement and suffering surround us like a blanket of fog. Know that God is present and will help you navigate your path.

Question: Is there anyone except Jesus in your cloud?

Prayer: Heavenly Father. We all live the dark cloud of uncertainty, sorrow, bereavement and suffering. Let us call out to you to guide our path. We know that you will be there with us. Amen.