Peace At Last Ministries (PALM)

Sharing God's comfort with the terminally-ill, their loved ones and caregivers.

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Paul & Kathleen Humphreys

It was a stormy winter night in Wisconsin.



I sat in a dimly-lit hospital room at a large veteran's hospital in downtown Milwaukee. The only sound was the rhythmic wheezing of an oxygen concentrator as it labored to sustain the life of an elderly soldier unconscious in his bed. He was mouth breathing, a visible sign his bodily organs were shutting down. Death for him was imminent.

The dying soldier was the father of a third person in the room, a middle-aged lady sitting beside his bed. She held her dad's hand in both of hers, lovingly caressing it.

Such was the situation I found myself that winter night almost a year ago.

As hospice chaplain, I had been called by the soldier's family to be present, to offer whatever comfort I could. Everyone else had returned home to attend to children, to pets and to get some much-needed sleep. Time seemed in limbo, like a clock whose dials were stuck. With everyone else gone, the grieving daughter turned to me with tears in her eyes and announced, *"I have some questions."*

What followed was a most-appropriate interaction about death, dying, and life after death.

I confess, these are the moments I feel most vulnerable as a hospice chaplain. It's like standing together with people on the precipice of eternity. Death is only moments away. What I say and how I say it matters. It can mean the difference between hope and hopelessness. It's not the place for theological theory or rehearsed rhetoric. I am called upon to convey truth, truth about God's existence, about sin and about God's gospel of grace and peace through Jesus Christ. The soldier's limp hand and raspy breaths were like cruel visual aids. They screamed affirmation of the truth of death's universality. The Bible explains the cause,

> [12] *Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned—"* Romans 5:12

But the truth, the Bible tells us, is also what sets us free. Jesus knew this. He explained,

> *"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life."* John 5:24

In those hours together the light of the gospel of God's grace penetrated the gloom of that hospital room giving hope where only hopelessness existed before. It is not known what was the spiritual condition of the soldier who drew his last breath that night. My presence and my message were too late for him. But for the loving daughter at his side, it seemed God was pleased to use my caring presence to pave the way for truth, truth that found a foothold in her heart.

Almost a year later, I received a text message from the soldier's daughter thanking me for the hours spent together that winter night. She summed up the spirit of Peace At Last Ministries with these heartfelt words,

> ***"That day, it felt as though you momentarily held my pain and gave it back to me once I had some direction."***

Thus, Kathleen and I thank you for standing together with us in this precious ministry God has entrusted to us by His grace. Your prayers, encouragement and support are greatly appreciated. Please know you are an integral part of our lives as we direct hurting people to the true comfort found in God's grace and peace.

2025 promises to be yet another full year. We are creating a 12 to 14-minute video presentation for those facing end-of-life challenges. The goal is to answer the kinds of questions often posed by those who stand at the threshold of eternity, such as the questions asked by the lady in this story.

Gratefully,



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