

*This could possibly be the best day ever,
(This could possibly be the best day ever)
And the forecast says that tomorrow will likely be a million and six times
better.*

*So make every minute count, jump up, jump in, and seize the day,
And let's make sure that in every single possible way,
Today is gonna be a great day!*

"Today is Gonna Be a Great Day" (Phineas and Ferb theme) by Bowling for Soup



The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. John 10:10 (NIV)

Recently we had one of those functions that are... not so awesome but, it had to be done. Noah and Kaara can have the propensity (like most 8 and 5 year olds) to make these things far worse than need be. To their credit they both behaved admirably, we did what we had to do and were able to get out with a minimum of pain. Once in the car and headed home Noah asked, "How long did *that* take?"

"Four hours," was our answer.

Noah, (wait for it)... "Well, that's four hours I'll never get back".

Average life expectancy of somebody living in the United States is about 78 years. I can't help but wonder how many at the end of their life will groan, when their flesh and body are spent, "Well that's 78 years I'll never get back."

The reality is for many, life turns out... not so awesome. For Christians (me) this creates a crisis of faith. Where is the "life to the full" I was promised?



*"I look up and I notice clouds. And then it starts to rain.
It always rains, doesn't it?"*

*"When the rains come. It's not like they might.
They do. It rains in our lives ...a lot." Rain (Nooma 2001)*

Where is the "life to the full" I was promised?

As many who will read this know that just over a year ago we were (and still are) looking very seriously at going to the mission field. For a number of reasons (if you would like to know specifics please ask) that can mostly be distilled down to *God's timing* we decided to postpone going. As a result we did make some life changes. I took a job in Hillsboro; we bought a new house, moved from Washougal, changed churches, and changed schools. It was the right decision, prayerfully made. The move has been good for the family. Noah is making friends, likes his new church and joined the chess club. Kaara has started kindergarten and is starting to read. Both of them are involved with AWANA and are far better at scripture memory than I ever was. Kris (finally) has a house with sidewalks, has returned to being a Sparks leader for AWANA, and no longer has to commute between Beaverton and East Clark County.

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Where is the "life to the full" I was promised?

I'm caught in a maze and can't find my way out, blinded by tears of pain and frustration.
Psalm 88:8 (MSG)

Elijah was afraid and ran for his life. When he came to Beersheba in Judah, he left his servant there, while he himself went a day's journey into the desert. He came to a broom tree, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. "I have had enough, LORD," he said. "Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors." Then he lay down under the tree and fell asleep. 1 Kings 19:3-5 (NIV)

*My pride is left for dead,
as my world gets shaken.
The thoughts inside my head
are so hard to control.*

Maybe Tonight, Maybe Tomorrow. Wideawake (2006)

Before I continue I do need to make a couple of things very clear: First as I take inventory, though the last year has not been without some personal difficulties, all in all, generally speaking things are going well. Secondly (and most significantly) my difficulties of the last year pale tremendously with others who have had to endure tragedy that I could neither imagine nor describe. What I am learning is that being a follower of Christ is *not* a guarantee that life will be "candy and unicorns"... sometimes it rains. But, Christmas is about hope.

*O come, Thou Day-Spring, come and cheer
Our spirits by Thine advent here
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night
And death's dark shadows put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.*

O Come O Come Emmanuel (3rd verse)

Hope of a Savior, hope of a future. I am 42 years old, in the church my entire life. I became a Christian when I was 6 years old. I would like to think I have a pretty good handle on what it means to follow Christ... The more I learn the more I realize I don't know anything, I don't have the answers. And maybe that's the point; stop looking for answers and cry out:

"Is anyone crying for help? God is listening, ready to rescue you." Psalm 34:17 (MSG)

"Evening, morning and noon I cry out in distress, and he hears my voice." Psalm 55:17 (MSG)

"And in the desert. There you saw how the LORD your God carried you, as a father carries his son, all the way you went until you reached this place." Deuteronomy 1:31(NIV)

Maybe, just maybe, THAT is the "life to the full" that is promised. I don't know. I haven't figured it out yet...

This Christmas may you live in the hope of a Savior, calling on Him and allow Him to carry you out of the desert. We live in evil days but know that tomorrow will likely be a million and six times better. So make every minute count, jump up, jump in, and seize the day.

Life has been very busy with new jobs, new schools, new church (for Noah and Kaara) and new home. Nemo, our cat, died a little while back. He was very old. A new kitten, we named Hope, joined the family. Family vacation this year was a week of camping at Fort Stevens. Noah has learned to ride a two wheeler and Kaara has graduated from tricycle to bike (with training wheels). While there have been adjustments, we are excited with where God is taking us.



Merry Christmas,
The Keeners

For those who didn't know we had moved; Our new address is 2611 NE 10th Ave. Hillsboro, OR 97124. We would love to hear from you!