

Blessed Be the Tie That Binds

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"I will repay you for the years the locusts have eaten..."

Joel 2:25 (NIV)

It was the kind of day you dream about. The warmth of the sun was just enough to keep the slightly chilled breeze from sending us inside. Dogwood flowers had burst into bloom in the woods while birds were chirping choruses that spring was finally here.

The table was set for guests down by the pond. My daughter brought tablecloths patterned with pastel flowers and appliqués to adorn the tabletops. A feast of meats and vegetables covered the large table near the front porch. A handmade crocheted tablecloth was the overlay on this table. It was handcrafted by my great-grandmother Castor. We were celebrating Easter Sunday, *Southern style*.

We kept it simple this year. Just my children and I, my daughter-in-law, son-in-law and little three-year-old Emma Grace, my granddaughter. The blessing was full of praise and thanksgiving. My heart was overjoyed to be amid my descendants as the spiritual covering for the family.

After lunch, I sat there and pondered the years gone by. I was trying to remember how long it had been since we had enjoyed our Easter Sunday meal in the front yard. Couldn't quite recall the year, but I knew it had been a while. You see, the timing must be just right. No rain, mild temperatures and of course, the family and all the family Labradors.

When I saw Emma Grace frolic through the front yard, parading her blue and white checked dress, I realized that God's promise of new beginnings is so true. I even felt my daughter's unborn child kick for the first time. God is so good. He keeps his promises.

I was reminded of the Scripture in Joel 2:25 (NIV)

²⁵ "I will repay you for the years the locusts have eaten—
the great locust and the young locust,
the other locusts and the locust swarm
my great army that I sent among you.

The Lord was promising His people that He would restore the land and fill their vats to overflowing. Divine deliverance was promised. The Lord told them that they would be restored and never again be put to shame.

I recalled the years of healing for our family from a time of brokenness and pain from divorce. It all became so clear to me as I sat and listened to conversation and observed the camaraderie of the day. This Easter Sunday will always be a reminder of God's grace and goodness; His

promise that He will never leave us nor forsake us. Just as Jesus died on the cross and rose again to save us from our sins and the heartaches of the world, we celebrated this year with an extra dose of praise and thanksgiving.

As my son-in-law left that afternoon, he humbly and gratefully said, "It was a perfect day." The meal, the conversation, the weather, and of course, the family gathering made it perfect. We were so blessed this Easter Sunday. We recalled the last time we had celebrated Easter on the front lawn. It was the year 1999, when he and my daughter graduated from high school.

A decade of change and healing. A time of new beginnings and new life.

Prayer

Father God, thank you for healing and new life. Thank you for sending your Son, Jesus, to die for us and give us hope to spend eternity with you. Amen