

ROOSEVELT'S LIFE: AFTER TRAGEDY

John 2:1-11

When Theodore Roosevelt was an Assembly man in the legislature of the state of New York, events developed in his personal life that would wound him deeply. On February 13, Roosevelt, seated on the floor of the Assembly, received a telegram informing him that his wife Alice had given birth to a baby girl late the night before. He received the congratulations of his colleagues but decided to finish work on legislative matters before leaving for home to be with his family.

Several hours later he received another telegram telling him that his wife was extremely ill and so too his mother. He immediately left for the train station. The train seemed to move very slowly down the Hudson Valley. Normally, the trip took five hours but during this journey it would be longer due to the heavy fog. All Roosevelt could do was to read the two telegrams over and over again. When he finally did arrive at the station, it was difficult to find his home because of the fog.

When he did find his home, he found that Alice, ill with Bright's disease, was semi-comatose and near death. Alice barely recognized him as he sat with her in his arms. Not only was his wife near death, but also his mother Mittie was dying with typhoid fever on the floor below. Theodore Roosevelt was informed that if he wanted to see his mother for the last time he had better do that now.

Finally, at three in the morning, Mittie died, and Theodore went back upstairs to be with Alice. As morning came, the fog became even worse and then by mid-morning there was rain, which was eventually followed by a brief appearance of the sun. When the morning passed over into the afternoon, Alice died. It was February 14, 1884, and Roosevelt wrote in his diary: "The light was gone out of my life." Two days after Alice's death, he wrote in his diary: "For joy or sorrow, my life has now been lived out."

Imagine, Theodore Roosevelt believed that his life was virtually over. He saw little reason to go on with life. Yet this is the same man who would go on to be the President of the United States. As President, he would develop our national park system, develop laws against abusive child labor and laws to regulate the nation's food supply, develop the Panama Canal, and will always be remembered for the immortal words "speak softly and carry a big stick." Obviously, his life was not over when his mother and wife died. Even at the marriage feast in Cana in Galilee, Jesus proved that God can do far more than we can ever anticipate. When we think that all hope is lost, God is still in the miracle business.

That is good news for us today, to know that whatever is happening in our lives God is with us and God is still in the miracle business. That is why we should give everything to God in prayer to guide us and hold us in times of need. God can do what we cannot. We need to learn to trust in God in all things because we only see a myopic glimpse of what God is doing in our lives. Let us trust the one that Created us for God knows what we need and will provide for us the best God has to offer.

God bless,
Pastor Barbara