

# A Quiet Place

## Devotion

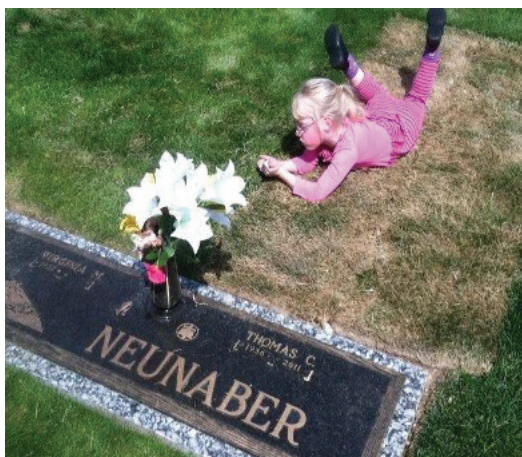
*When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them (Matthew 14:14).*

Memorial Day weekend, my husband and I gathered flowers and placed them at the foot of our parents' graves. Although it is a tradition for us, we sometimes have conflicts that prevent us from doing so. Last year, my mother was recovering from a stroke, and she lamented her inability to visit my father's grave since she was still rehabilitating.

When I was growing up, we did not live near cemeteries where our family members were buried. We had moved west when I was in grade school, leaving the bodies of our deceased ancestors in Illinois. However, my husband's family has had an Idaho presence for several generations. Some years we have graced cemeteries in several surrounding communities with flowers. As newlyweds, we went with his parents, and now we visit their graves.

Mourning is such a personal emotion. We, like Jesus, sometimes just want everyone to leave us alone and let us grieve in peace. But, like Jesus, there are things that must be done and people who need us, so we carry on.

Matthew 14 begins with the details of John the Baptist's death: *Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a desolate place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns (Matthew 14:13).*



What follows is a familiar story of Jesus having compassion on the crowds while He feeds 5,000-plus people with a boy's lunch. The crowds did not leave Jesus alone to mourn the death of His cousin in peace. They probably did not know of His grief or of His desire to be alone.

This is the first year we visited my mother's grave. Last year she was anxious to visit my father in the cemetery, and this year she lies beside him. Last summer was such a whirlwind of activity from mom's hospitalizations, to her funeral plans, to her estate issues. There was no quiet place to hide. In truth, the same day as the funeral, the family rushed up to the mountains to see my grandson in a theatrical performance that evening. Life washes over us.

But like the crowds that followed Jesus, He has compassion on us, too. *When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them* (Matthew 14:14). He feeds us and sustains us with the everlasting Bread of Life. *Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst”* (John 6:35). Although we may not find a physical, quiet place to mourn, we have a spiritual, quiet place in the Savior.

**Prayer:** Lord, be the balm for an aching heart as we remember loved ones who are no longer with us. Provide us a quiet place to rest in You as You sustain us through the crowds of life. Amen.

All quoted Scripture is from the ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®, copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers). Used by permission. All rights reserved.

*A Quiet Place* by Terri Bentley, Garden Valley, Idaho  
Copyright © 2021, Lutheran Women’s Missionary League. All Rights Reserved.  
*lwml.org*