

the message of suffering

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I sat alone in the hotel room in Houston, Texas, trying desperately to reduce Catherine Marshall's life into 550 words. My wife, Jackie, had called from our home in Florida to tell me that Catherine had died. I relayed the news to my magazine publisher. A short article was needed by late afternoon for the magazine's deadline.

A month later, I was back in Houston. Jackie was with me when we received word that Corrie Ten Boom another dear friend had gone to be with the Lord. Again I was at the typewriter trying to march through this great Christian's life. I had been allotted 650 words.

Apart from the pressing need to reduce my words was an even greater need to sort

through my personal upheaval.

There is no fear of dying for me. I know that my salvation is secure in my relationship with Jesus. Yet I found that I'm not a great deal different from many others. I fear the dying process. My dread of pain has made me trip over God's redemptive lessons found only in the crucible of suffering.

Are we so eager to be healed (and healing is part of our heritage) that we catapult over the message of suffering? God is God of all things. In the midst of pain, He is God. God of the resurrection is Lord of the cross. The Master of Life is as present in the crucifixion as He is at the empty tomb.

God is with me redeeming the circumstan-

ces no matter what the situation.

Catherine kept a daily journal. In reading excerpts, a secret of living emerged from her year of suffering before her death. At the bottom of the crucible filled with pain are the remnants of love. When all has been experienced and felt, Catherine realized we must start loving without reservation and criticism and in return allow others to love us.



This is the lesson of the sufferings of the cross. That we might love each other even as Christ loves us. Only in laying down our lives and sharing in His love, can we find the true purpose of the resurrection.

