

Corridors

Today we stand in a long corridor, with lots of doors. Some are closed, some swing idly on their hinges while others stand slightly ajar. Most doors are nondescript with little marking. Some of the doorknobs show evidence of daily use, while others appear tarnished and old; not having been used for a long time. Not all the doors are the same size and shape. Some look pleasant and inviting while others appear formidable and austere. While most of the doors appear to be unlocked, a few here and there are barred with heavy locks so no one may enter. It makes one wonder what lurks behind those doors, and where we would find the key.

This corridor has a unique peculiarity; the doors of the past appear in the future. As we travel along, we repeatedly pass the same doors. This is not strange, because this is the corridor of my life, and behind each of these doors are experiences and memories that I have lived through.

Nothing in these rooms can be changed; each represents an event in the life I have lived. Some hold happiness and joy, while others hold embarrassment, sorrow, and pain. Even the air around a few of the latter feels thick and heavy to breathe. What we are seeing are the past happenings of my life, which cannot be done over again.

Occasionally we open a door and look inside. Some of the scenes are pleasant memories that have happened, while others cause shame, remorse, or pain. The painful ones we quickly slam shut and lock up tight, while the pleasant ones cause us to reminisce for awhile before moving on.

As we look back, our vision allows us to see the hills, valleys, twists, and turns through which I have come in life. This vantage point lends clarity to some of the journey, answering some of the questions I would have had. On the other hand, we cannot see into the future. It is like the corridor has a bend in it which does not allow us to see very far ahead.

Years ago, I came to a crossroads in the corridor of life. There I met Jesus who offered to walk with me. At the time it was a difficult decision, but over and over it has proven to be the wisest decision I ever made. There was a sacrifice with it of course; I needed to surrender my will, but His presence has kept me on the right course. No telling where I would be today without Him.

At times I have taken different corridors and left Him behind, but He came, found me, and invited me back to His path. I now know I cannot travel without him at my side, for there are shadows and darkness all around. Parts of the path which we walk are not smooth or light, however with his steady presents nearby, I am able to keep walking. At times I stumble and fall but He picks me up; carrying me until it is light again. It's really wonderful to have Him as a traveling companion.

As we move along, some of the doors of the past seem to draw me to look in and re-live the experience. Some rooms are filled with happy memories, others with pain, sadness, and sorrow; still others cause me to blush with shame and regret. Some of the memories cause me to weep; and then I feel His hand on my shoulder, His tears mingle with mine as we look at what could have or should have been. As He holds me in His embrace, I feel only His love and compassion; He understands, no words needed. In time we softly close the door and I stumble blindly away, as if the memories are stones upon the ground. Gently He holds my hand as I stumble; He is as steady

as a rock. There is something healing about Him being next to me in those times of recollections; I feel no judgment, only His healing, care, and compassion.

I find that as Jesus walks with me, He shows me other doors, doors of opportunity, joy, and happiness. The strange thing is that as he shows me those doors, more of those appear in the corridor and fewer of the other ones. Then there are new ones which give me understanding and new insights.

From time to time on our journey He draws my attention to a door and says softly, "This one, I think you should go in, and clean it out, it will make you feel better." So, with a heavy heart, and tears in my eyes I begin to clean it out; handing him the rubbish as I do. It is full, full of ugly things that I have kept closed up. I hand him my pain, and bitterness, anger, and resentment, and all the mess that goes with it; revenge and offence also find themselves going out the door. In return for my garbage, He gives me love, self-acceptance, forgiveness for myself and others, as well as freedom and joy. As we sweep it clean, He tells me to throw open the windows and let the sunshine of His peace come in. As we leave, he says, "Leave it open. Leave the door open so that it can air out. You have nothing to hide." And so, with many doors, He says, "Leave them open" so that's what I do. In the past when I approached those doors, I would feel anxiety, and strong emotions; whereas now that has subsided, and I see my life in a different light. As I now pass those doors, they are not shut with painful memories lurking behind them anymore. Occasionally, some of the feelings that were once locked in them want to come back, but not like before. I am not bound by closed doors.

As I turn and look back, I now see a corridor with open doors, and His gentle, peaceful light radiating out of them, illuminating the past. Now, with the light of His understanding and acceptance, those old rooms filled with fearful memories look far less terrifying than they once seemed.

There is an amazing thing which has happened. In the past it seemed I had few happy childhood memories. In fact, it seemed I had difficulty remembering anything at all. Perhaps this was because of fear, protecting me from getting hurt. However, since Jesus has helped me take a better look at the past, things have changed. I am no longer bound by fear of what is lurking behind those doors of memory. As a matter of fact, many of them are now open and I can freely go in and out of them without fear. As I do so, I see many more doors that I have almost forgotten existed. They are the doors filled with happiness and laughter; pleasant memories spent with family and friends. I hope to find more of these doors of memory in the future.

There are a few doors which He says I should keep closed. They are not locked, and marked: Unpleasant Memories, and another, Forgiven, while others, Out of Respect Please Keep Shut, Unanswerable Questions, Fear, and What Could Have Been. These are rooms I have trusted to Jesus. They contain things I cannot change, which He has helped me to deal with. It would be an untruth to say that I am never tempted to go to those rooms and look inside, after all the doors are unlocked. However, to do so may re-open the door to resentment, pain, and despair.

Sometimes I am forced by circumstances to enter those rooms; they are full of memories. For some of them, there is an abhorrence, while others feel good to pick up, heft their weight and remember

how I got them. I know I cannot remain there; I must move on leaving them behind. I do not have room to carry any of them along, they are too heavy and would drag my spirits down. So, I leave, softly closing the door behind me, and walk on.

And one day when I get to the end of the corridor, I expect to see that door of all doors, shining brightly, and the sign: Welcome Home!

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