

In this life, we have many sad goodbyes...that are redemptive if our faith is in Yeshua



36And when he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all. 37Then they all wept freely, and fell on Paul's neck and kissed him, 38sorrowing most of all for the words which he spoke, that they would see his face no more. Acts 20:36-38

Sad Goodbyes

Today was a bittersweet day for the Olsen kids. It was the last day of school before the summer break. Yea! But, they were leaving behind one of their favorite teachers and the elementary school that they had spent five years in was closing down. So as I stood today with other parents in the rain waiting for my kids to come out the elementary school doors for the last time, I had a lump in my throat. Then the drive home was strangely quiet as my kids both processed the ending of joys they had experienced and of an exceptionally fun year with a good group of friends and a beloved teacher.

I've had a number of sad goodbyes over the years. Here's a smattering list:

- Saying goodbye to high school and college friends as those training years concluded.

- Saying goodbye to my parents and friends as I drove out to Colorado as a young twenty-something.
- Saying goodbye to a collective experience with students each year in a training school that I helped run at a previous congregation.
- Saying goodbye to friends in that same congregation to launch out full-time with a fledgling work in Englewood.
- Saying goodbye to my mom (and a growing number of family/friends) for the last time on this earth.
- Saying goodbye to different friends as they launched out into some new initiative or adventure.

The over-arching theme of these and many other sad goodbyes is that I loved the people and had sweet memories with them.

With the vast majority of my goodbyes, because of a mutual faith in Yeshua, it came with the understanding that it was really just an "I'll see you later." What a joy to know that because of our Savior that our goodbyes are not permanent. A good number of these goodbyes have also been for the sake of the kingdom--motivated by a desire to see more people come into Yah's family.

I have been fortunate that so many of my sad goodbyes have been "right" in the parting. But, certainly not all my (or our) goodbyes have been overtly redemptive--a few have been just painfully wrong. But even for those goodbyes the Scriptures does promise that all things work together for good for those who love God and are called according to His purpose (Romans 8:28). So even the painful more tragic events that I can't make sense of in my life are not wasted if my heart is growing in love with Yeshua.

So, today my kids have red eyes, and I have a lump in my throat, but I'm especially mindful of God's goodness and the future, glorious, eternal hellos that are ours as we hold fast to Yeshua.