

Hebrews 11:39-40 - These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised, since God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect.

These final verses from the Hall of Faith chapter of the book of Hebrews has brought me much consolation over the past few days as I have mourned the loss of our brother and friend, evangelist Nabeel Qureshi. Having fully expected that God would heal him in response to the prayers of hundreds of thousands of believers around the world, I joined my heart and voice to the company of saints and angels as I prayed for and with Nabeel to be healed three times.

When he died shortly after noon on Saturday, his wife Michelle called me to ask, "Do you believe we should pray for Nabeel to be raised from the dead?" Without hesitation, I said, "Yes, yes, yes!" As I prayed with her over the phone for nearly a half hour, our faith rose and we expected that God would answer our prayers in a new way, bringing even greater glory to Himself.

Although these prayers for earthly resurrection went on throughout the day and evening, this did not happen. My heart felt crushed with disappointment, although I knew that it was still possible for God to raise him from the dead. After all, Lazarus had been in the tomb for three days before Jesus raised him. With God, all things are possible.

By Sunday morning, my emotions were raw, manifesting through torrents of tears throughout our church service. I still didn't understand this mystery of why our friend had neither been healed in his body nor raised from the dead. As Philippe and I drove home from church, we both felt prompted to attend a gathering of Nabeel's family and close friends in Houston that afternoon.

The mystery began to unfold as we entered the home of our friends, Dr. Jim and Shireen Tour. God's children, both Muslims and Christians, were assembled from the four corners of the earth, seeking His face - and finding it in one another. For surely we are His inheritance and He supplies what we need according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus. Love was everywhere, the love of God that surpasses all knowledge and overrides all barriers.

God's word tells us in Romans 5:5 that hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit, whom He has given to us. I imagined Nabeel, watching from a window in heaven, as his beloved family and friends communed in that

love, rejoicing in God's greater plan to unite His children, even through Nabeel's death. A kernel of wheat had fallen to the ground and would produce a mighty harvest of lasting fruit.

It is through this trust in Jesus that we can offer to God a sacrifice of praise, the fruit of lips that profess His name. For He is risen and has become the first fruits of them that sleep. Nabeel's life as a living sacrifice, dedicated to being the representation of Jesus Christ to this world, is reaping a great harvest. He has left a legacy of love. And love never fails.

Now Nabeel is part of that great cloud of faithful witnesses surrounding us, urging us on to throw off every hindrance and keep our eyes on Jesus as the Author and Perfecter of our faith. So we cast off our disappointment in what we did not see and look at the One whose ways are higher, who always knows what is best. We can hold unswervingly to this hope we profess as an anchor for our souls, knowing that He who promised is faithful. Always.