



A Child's Life Does Matter – A 2016 message about Mrs. Emma L Wilson King

In 1954 Mrs. Emma L Wilson King's strength and faith as a mother was sternly placed on trial. In many respects, It is not unlike trials mothers, African American mothers in particular in this year 2016 ask why my child? Why Me oh Lord? A trial no mother, no parent should ever have to face.

Today as Americans, we struggle with truth in understanding the premise of the "Black Lives Matter" movement. A simple movement which acts to place on notice to the world that African American children, men and women do matter.

The pain of having lost a child due to inner city violence or the systematic viciousness of a force he or she is too often profiled as to how that child looks rather than the soul they bear is such a pathetic statement on America. For America and places like East St. Louis, Illinois are much better than this analogy.

An indelible episode as a mother Mrs. King would woefully face as she too would come to learn that her faith was to be tested in an instance as she at the time only wanted for her children to be safe and secure while in their home. As a young thirty-one year old mother she was facing that tragedy so imminently. It may not have been the unlawful discharge of a weapon; but, the discharge was an armament even more consequential. The scarcity of not having an adequate financial means meant finding work outside the home to ensure her children would be free from hunger, pain and fear. It also meant not always having an eye on those you love.

On one such cold winter's day, a distraught mother of six would come home to learn her infant child's dress was ignited by the innocent heat emanating from the hot pot belly stove used to warm the bedroom. The child had suffered major burns over nearly seventy percent of her body and near death.

True parenting is about sacrificing whatever it is for the child. For that parent, that child's life does matter.

At hospital, Mrs. King would endure skin grafts from her body to her child to ensure her child would have a survivable fighting chance. In early 1950s America this medical procedure was not new but extremely cautionary. For a bewildered mother she would have given her soul to not allow her infant to sustain such pain as unimaginable. "Oh lord why?" She would ask. As a result, the child would undergo months of grueling surgeries. Mrs. King would tirelessly be there, at her daughter's side as was her custom to comfort in the best means she knew how, to help heal wounds.

A Mother's voice, touch and love can be so astounding. During this ordeal many at the hospital and in the neighborhood came to admire Mrs. King's strength, perseverance and courage. Characteristics that are truly emblematic of a mother's care. For no parent should have to watch a child suffer. In later years, the child would mature and become an adult who would support her siblings. That child Mrs. King would steadfastly care for also grew up to become a successful educator as well as an amazing mother of three phenomenal daughters. Those are the clarion calls which echoes today. To that parent, the child does matter. Whatever the child's circumstance: Born to wealth, poverty or indifference. That child be an infant, teen or adult; their life does matter.