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To the Church in Springfield,

"Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted"

Today I learned the truth of this wonderful promise. Through the wisdom and love of his parents, Jen and Rob Oller, and the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, my grandson Henry Robert Oller was born, lived a few hours with us in this world, and then went home to be with Jesus. Although we mourn for their loss, and ours, we are comforted in the knowledge that while Henry lived in this world, he lived in the presence of love.

Months ago, talking to Jen one night, she said that lately she had been asking God, "Why? Why Henry Robert? Why our family?" Until we get to heaven, who can say for sure, but if I have any understanding of God's heart, I know this: that Jen and Rob were chosen to be Henry Robert's Mom and Dad. They were chosen because, if this little boy's life was to have meaning in this world, he would need special parents, who would recognize him, cherish him, and care for him; who would make wise decisions grounded in faith, hope, and love, and prepare him for eternity safe in the bosom of their family and church. They were chosen because Henry Robert needed a Mom and Dad, and when God asked for volunteers, Jen and Rob said, "Yes." I don't know when they said this, nor, probably, do they. Maybe it was at some morning worship when they held hands and sang, "Take my life and let it be, consecrated, Lord, to Thee". Or maybe, in a way few of us ever know, God is answering their prayer:

"Purify our hearts, let them be as gold and precious silver,
Purify our hearts, let them be as gold, pure gold,
Refiner's fire, our hearts' one desire, is to be holy,
Set apart for You, Lord. I choose to be Holy,
Set apart for You, my Master, ready to do Thy will".

I know that prayer is real - I've heard them sing it. When we say "Yes" to Jesus, we share in both His glory and his suffering, but as we saw yesterday, "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth with weeping, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing". It's a wonderful promise.

As for Henry Robert, during his brief life, from the moment his mother knew he lived in her womb until he died in his father's arms Henry Robert was loved by his parents. He spent his whole life in the arms of his Mom or Dad, his ears filled with scriptures and songs. How many of us are that fortunate? And, Jen and Rob know that Henry is home safe. That's no small accomplishment for parents. We don't really rest until our kids are home safe, and it's the work of a lifetime. Parents of teenagers will recall the nights that we waited anxiously for the car to drive in the driveway, and then listened for the knock on the bedroom door as our son or daughter whispers "I'm home, Dad - love you, Mom". And we whisper back, "Love you too. Good night". And then we can rest. I believe that if we had the right ears to hear, we would hear Henry Robert whispering, "I'm home safe, Mom and Dad". Love you too, Henry. Good night - see you in the morning.

Grandpa.