

My friend called, as he did from time to time, to ask me to help sing at a funeral service.

“You know the family well enough to know that the daughter is quite at a loss without her father. They were both such music lovers, and I know that we can be a great comfort¹ to her in the memorial to him.”

I knew what he was really saying. There was a certain level that we would need to attain to make the moment special. I wasn't sure that I could provide that in this case – or in any case. I knew that I had limited ability, but that condition was made worse by the fact that I had been suffering from a sore throat for the last day or so. I was concerned that I was getting a cold.

So I asked for special help. I needed a substitute – someone from a higher choir. I prayed for such support as I made my way to the service. We warmed up as a group, as we usually do, and I felt that my effort was inadequate. So I continued to pray.

When our time came, the group blended its voices together in great harmony. The music was indeed beautiful and uplifting, and was appropriate for the connection we were trying to make for the family of the one that was lost. The daughter, in particular, I could tell was weeping through tightly shut eyes, but as long as her ears were open I knew that she could be touched by the hymns.

When I was singing, I could feel the presence of a power within me. At the end of the service and those leaving were complementing the group, it was difficult for me to respond. How could I say, “It wasn't really me?”

The Scripture says that sometimes we entertain angels unawares². But I knew that I had been visited by an angel: there had been a substitution that had saved the day. I was glad for that – and hoped that the daughter was helped with the closure that she needed.

It also came to me that on a higher level, Christ Himself substituted for me so that I could live. That thought comforted me as well.

1. Colossians 3:16
2. Hebrews 13:2