

My Grandmother's Chair – (July 18, 2013 – Karen Pickering)

I have two chairs that my grandparents received on their wedding day. They are tiny by today's standards. I used them as thrones when I was a little girl. There was a matching loveseat that I spent hours sprawled out in reading the World Book Encyclopedia. The loveseat met an unfortunate end when it got in the way of a semi-truck, but that is another story.

The chairs came to me before my mother died. About 10 years ago one of the chairs was damaged while being used in a drama production. The front leg and part of the frame was shattered. I couldn't bear to throw it away. How do you discard something that you have lived with all your life? It was the only thing I owned that had belonged to my grandmother...so it sat in my basement. The chair that wasn't damaged sat with it. It seemed they should be together. I looked at it every once in a while and tried to see if I could fix it. It seemed impossible. There were just too many pieces. Still, I couldn't throw it away.

A couple years ago I decided to buy some fabric and recover the good one. I bought enough for two chairs just in case. I started on the broken one first. I took out the old tacks, peeled back the old fabric, took out the stuffing and removed the webbing from the bottom. The springs had come loose. The leg and frame looked hopeless. I carefully took the leg apart where it met the frame. I cleaned out the old glue, re-glued and fit the pieces back together. I added wood filler where the wood was damaged and splintered. I bound it up tight while the glue dried. I also put some braces up inside where they wouldn't show. I sanded and covered up the scratches with stain.

Next I started putting new webbing on the bottom, retying the springs, layering the burlap, stuffing, cotton cloth, more stuffing, more cotton cloth and finally the finish fabric. The braid went on last to cover all the edges. I stepped back and looked it over. I was amazed. It was beautiful. It was also strong...stronger than it had ever been. I recovered the good chair too. I had to redo some of the stuffing, but I didn't have to touch the springs or webbing. They were a matched set again. They looked the same, but one was much stronger. The one that had been broken, seemingly beyond usefulness, was now the stronger of the two.

My thoughts turned to people. Many are broken and shattered. As broken people we have two choices. We can hide in the basement and expect other people to stay there with us or we can give our broken and shattered pieces to the one who made us. It will hurt. He will have to take things apart, scrape off things that shouldn't be there and dig out some rotten bits. But as we trust Him to work with our life He will make us beautiful and strong...stronger than we would have been if we had never been broken.

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. Ephesians 2:10

