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“From the Pastor’s Desk”

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LET US CELEBRATE FATHERHOOD

This month, on Father’s day we will celebrate our father’s who have been a blessing to us and our generation. We who have been blessed to have a great father will talk freely of what he has meant to us throughout all these years. Those who were unfortunate in not having such a father will find it difficult on this day unless they have received Christ as their Lord and Savior and come to understand that they do have a Heavenly Father who is watching over them.

Fathers, mentioned throughout the Holy Scriptures have provided us a variety of fathers whose ways and customs have left an indelible mark upon the generations that followed after them. On the other hand it also tells us the story of those whose behavior would not be worthy to even consider because of the wickedness of their ways. I would not have wanted to be King Saul’s son, as Jonathan was, who constantly found his life and the life of his friend in constant jeopardy due to his jealous streak of David and his cruelty with a dangerous use of power to do anything as he pleased regardless of the law.

Abraham has been called a father by many generations. His courage to venture where he had never been simply because God told him too is something you can’t help but admire this father because of his faith and obedience toward God.

Job, is another father whom I admire because of his patience which is a quality I dare most people admire and would like to possess. The Lord knows we as children need this kind of father which possess a lot of patience; I know I did. When I was a child, there were times when it was evident that I was no angel. Knowing my father’s belief about child discipline, I would often pray, when I knew I was in trouble, that God would grant him the “patience of Job” so I would not get spanked. For some reason God or my father didn’t seem to listen to that prayer very often.

Solomon, in all the wisdom that the Scripture tells us he possessed as well as something which we cannot deny, is sort of a mystery to me. Because, while it is true that he waxed strong in wisdom, it is also true that he also made some terrible mistakes throughout his life. It is this which leaves us to wonder as to how he could be so foolish as well as makes you wonder what his standing with God was like when he departed from this life.

CALEB, THE GOOD FATHER

Recently in one of my messages to our congregation I talked about Caleb. Most people who have read or studied the Book of Joshua would be familiar with this name. But most people remember him more about his role as a spy who went with Joshua and eleven other men to spy out the Promised Land just after they had been delivered from Egyptian bondage for 400 years.

Now, I am sure if you are like me, once-in-a-while you like to watch mystery filler spy stories. We especially like it when we know the spy is the leading star and are confident in the end regardless of the danger, will somehow survive. But the suspense provides the thrill and we watch to see how, regardless of how bad it looks, we just know that our star is going pull through. We don’t know how, we just know that is the way Hollywood does it.

However, when Joshua and Caleb went, they went with confidence that God would protect them and their fellow spies while they searched out the land and gathered the information which Moses and the elders of Israel had instructed them to gather. Both Joshua and Caleb were faithful in following orders. And they were faithful in giving Moses a good report. But the other ten spies came back with the kind of report that sent the listeners to their tents in tears. The outcome would mean a lost opportunity of entering the Promised Land and forced them back to the wilderness to spend the rest of their lives in the wilderness.

Only Joshua and Caleb would be the only ones who would survive their generation to enter the Promised Land. So first of all, we know Caleb, as a father, was a survivor. **We need fathers who are survivors.**

Caleb was not only a father, but he was something more. Now when the Book of Joshua identified Caleb we read this about him. While he was listed in this book as the “**sons of Judah**” it also tells us that his name was “Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite (note it did not say, Judah.)

Expositor Bible Commentary tells us: Kenizzite, rightly, same as Kenizzite in Gen.15:19), as if he had been a descendant of Kenaz, a son of Esau (Gen. 36:11; 15), and a member of the Kenizzite tribe. It was not customary to distinguish Israelites in this way, **but only those who had come among them from other tribes. Therefore, we conclude that Caleb, was a foreign immigrant,** who for some reason decided to assimilate among the tribe of Judah. In doing so he thus was able to gain entrance into the family of God. He was not born of the family of Judah, but rather through the providence of God, was given the opportunity to become a part of the family of God. And no doubt, out of gratitude of this relationship, readily accepted the role of being a spy for the people of God.

CALEB ENLISTED THE HELP OF A YOUNGER MAN

Then what makes the story interesting, at 85 years of age is when Caleb layed claim on a certain piece of land because of the promise of such an inheritance by the God of Moses and Joshua. Once inside the Promised Land he set about to enlist the help of a younger man to help him obtain what he had been promised. And to help entice some young man's help he made the promise that he would give Achsah his daughter as a wife to this special volunteer. (Joshua 15:16)

The young man that answered Caleb's call was named Othniel. To be married into the family of the chief prince of the tribe of Judah was no doubt considered to be a very special honour. And no doubt a very large dowry that came with the young lady may have been enticing as well. And also, there was another benefit wealth of the city of Debir was also promised should it be taken in the conquest. Just as Caleb was blessed to be received into the family of Judah, Caleb was able to in turn do the same for another young man that was a part of the younger generation. In one sense he was blessing another in return for the blessing which he had received in his youth to be a part of the family of God. No doubt this young man would come to look upon Caleb not just as a senior, but as a father as well.

IF EVER THERE WAS A NEED OF GOOD FATHERS IT IS TODAY

I believe that there are a host of people throughout our nation which are looking for a father. No, not after the flesh. Because even fathers after the flesh will at times disappoint us. But if God's people can take on the role and responsibility to share their lives, time, and resources with others there is no limit to what God will and can do in such a relationship. This is no doubt what Paul was to young Timothy in the New Testament. I would call it a spiritual adoption.

I realize that our nation is in turmoil over the “immigration crisis” of so many coming from our southern borders seeking better living conditions and better opportunities for employment, etc. If I had been born and raised in some of these countries where they are coming from I may have been found guilty of doing the same. I am not saying that they are doing it right in how they are doing it. I just sympathize with their situation and pray that some kind of remedy be found to resolve this.

We have put out a welcome mat in New York harbor which in 1883, American poet Emma Lazarus wrote a sonnet to raise money for the pedestal of the Statue of Liberty...you and I know what that statue has meant to so many foreign immigrants who have over the years seen that lady in New York harbor. “*Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses, yearning to be free....I lift up my lamp beside the golden door.*” Since then this nation has welcomed the huddle masses to our shores. From that alone just think how many times that “*open door to the masses*” have allowed the church of Jesus Christ the opportunity to adopt such and share with them the message of the Gospel. Like Caleb many children of God that grew up in the family of God now have become their spiritual fathers to those who were once lost, but are now found. Through the years it has been my privilege to give pastoral care to such and have proven to be a most rewarding ministry. Amen.