

THE STRONG PULL OF EMOTIONS

I shared in my mid-week message last time how I officiated at a graveside service recently. In that message I spoke about how the one grandson commented that his grandfather was the person he needed the most at every stage of life. This grandson has young children of his own who were at the cemetery that Saturday. It was the first time these young children had to deal with grief and loss.

When they got home from the cemetery this father could see that his children were struggling with their feelings. When it came time for bed, these youngsters were having a hard time falling asleep as a result of still dealing with their emotions from earlier in the day. When he realized this, the father looked for inspiration from his own grandfather in order to try and help his own kids with their emotions. Even though they were already dressed for bed, he told the kids to get ready because they were going to go to the bowling alley just like Great-Grandpa enjoyed doing. So, off this father and his grieving children went to relive and create memories of their own bowling just like their great-grandpa would do. By the time they got home from bowling the youngsters were no longer feeling sad and fell asleep very quickly.

This story was shared with me a week after I did the service for the family. Hearing this story was a reminder to me of the impact emotions can have on us no matter what age or stage of life we are at. It was not only these great-grandchildren affected by loss and grief that day but also the deceased's grandchildren, children and nieces and nephews too. Both young and old were being pulled by their emotions that day which is understandable.

Hearing this story also reminded me how we can find inspiration from the examples of others in order to properly handle these emotions in a positive way. For this father of these young children, he found inspiration in something his grandfather would do in order to help these children handle their grief. Hearing this story also reminded me how we need to share incidents like this with others so they might be inspired to do the same in similar situations. I was not going through grief at the time this story was shared with me, but it did put a smile on my face seeing the impact this great-grandfather was still having on his family members.

Hearing this story also got me thinking how *we can turn to Jesus* to find inspiration when we are being pulled by various emotions. We are so blessed to have the stories we do in the Gospels about how Jesus lived His life in order to learn from. Some of the stories about Jesus we can learn from have to do with powerful emotions trying to pull us in different directions. For instance, if we ever find ourselves being pulled by the powerful emotion of temptation, we can look to Jesus' example in the wilderness to learn to be able to resist giving in. If we are struggling with the powerful emotion of suffering, we can look to Jesus' example in the Garden of Gethsemane and find inspiration to keep praying through it just like He did in order to be at peace again. If we find ourselves struggling emotionally due to the stresses and pressures of everyday life, we can follow Jesus' example by finding time away with our Heavenly Father in prayer in order to discover balance and proper centering again. If we are struggling emotionally with powerful doubts, we can focus on Jesus' words He shared with Thomas when he was dealing with this emotion:

Blessed are those who believe without seeing me (John 20:29).

As we saw in the case of the father with his children, one way we can deal with powerful emotions that are trying to pull us in different directions is to find inspiration from others in how they handled these situations. For this father he found inspiration in something his grandfather would do. As children of God, and brothers and sisters of Christ, may we look to Jesus for inspiration about how best to handle these situations when we are being pulled in different directions by our emotions. By so doing we will experience what these young children were eventually able to do by having a peaceful night sleep.

Keep safe and God bless,

Pastor Dean