

WHO WE NEED AT EVERY STAGE OF LIFE

On Saturday morning I conducted a graveside service while there was a heavy down pour of rain, mixed in with a few cracks of thunder. A family member commented how the deceased was going out with a bang after one crack of thunder was heard. The deceased may have gone out with a bang of thunder during the service, but he certainly made quite an impression on his family while he lived out his life. This became evident to me when the man's grandson wrote me before the service and said, "Grandpa was the person I needed the most at every stage of my life." I used this grandson's observation in my reflection at the graveside and then proceeded to share with the family some of the ways he was the person they needed at various stages in life. I reminded them:

- how he always had his great-grandchildren's favourite snacks available when they needed one when visiting,
- how he would be the one playing their favourite games with them on the floor when they were young,
- how he would put on funny glasses and make them smile whenever they needed a laugh,
- how he would teach his grandsons how to start dressing like a man when they became teenagers,
- how he would offer them advice on dating, and marriage when they needed it,
- how he would offer them advice on how best to cope through stress at work, or deal with difficult co-workers whenever in need of it,
- how he would listen to their stories when they needed somebody to listen,
- and how he would provide them with someone who was patient, thoughtful, and caring in their lives whenever then needed it most.

These were just a few of the memories I shared with the family at the graveside to remind them how blessed they were to have this person they needed most in their lives during every stage.

In the days following this service I have found myself at times thinking about this grandson's observation about how his grandfather was the person he needed the most at every stage of his life. I imagine each one of us might

have somebody who has been that person for us. The person we are thinking of may have been a constant presence in our life through every stage or may have been an individual who we needed most during a specific season. Regardless of whether that person has been with us consistently or for just a short season we recognize this individual has been given to us as a gift from God.

It is so easy for us to overlook the many ways in which God is looking after our needs. He is very conscious of our needs, whether they be physical, spiritual, or emotional in nature. He is not only aware of these needs, but desires to help meet them for us. One instance where we discover this truth in Scripture is found in **Mark 8** after Jesus had spent time teaching a large crowd of people. The people had run out of food, so Jesus called His disciples together and said to them:

I feel sorry for these people. They have been here with me for three days, and they have nothing left to eat. If I send them home hungry, they will faint along the way. For some of them have come a long distance. (Mark 8:2-3)

We discover in His words here how aware Jesus was of their needs and His desire to provide for them. Jesus took the seven loaves of bread that were available and a few small fish and miraculously fed this crowd of 4,000 people just like He had earlier with the larger group of 5,000.

This story and so many others in the Bible are meant to assure us that our Heavenly Father knows our needs and is faithful in meeting them for us. It is so important for us to understand that every concern or need we have is of interest to God because He loves us dearly. It is just as important for us to believe that no need is too large for Him to handle, nor is any concern too small for Him not to help us with.

A grandson came to realize what a gift and blessing he had in a grandfather who was the person he needed the most at every stage in life. May we understand this as well about our Heavenly Father.

Keep safe and God bless,

Pastor Dean