

AN UNEXPECTED CALL

On Sunday afternoon, I spent a bit of time planning out my basketball practices for the coming week and catching up on e-mails. The phone rang around 3:00 p.m. and I was surprised by whose name appeared that was calling. It was a colleague of mine in ministry that I had not talked to in three years. Prior to that, we probably only talked once since 2009. I got to know this minister when I was in Petrolia from 2001-2009. She became a good friend during that time, and we shared a lot of conversations together over coffee. After I moved back to Brantford, we just failed to stay in touch with each other. The busyness of life and ministry has a way of doing that between ministers. We still send Christmas cards to each other every year, but rarely pick up the phone and talk. In 2019 her son died, and Nadine and I went to the funeral to offer our support. I called her once on the phone after her son's death, but that was the last time we talked before Sunday. It was so good to hear her voice on the other end.

She shared with me how she just felt led by God to give me a call that afternoon. I am so glad that she followed God's prompting and reached out. We talked for over an hour. This is unusual for me to talk that long on the phone. I may talk a lot in a sermon, but when it comes to the phone, I try to keep my conversations short and sweet for the most part. There was so much for the two of us to catch up on. One of the things she shared with me was her journey to seek healing after her son's death. The last time I talked to her after the funeral, I knew she was not in a good place emotionally, nor spiritually. I prayed with her on the phone, and afterward to God asking Him to bring the right person into her life to help her to heal. My friend shared with me how God had answered that prayer for her. I noticed a huge difference in her from the previous conversation we had shortly after her son's death. She is stronger and more at peace right now. By the end of the conversation, we both realized that God had arranged for this unexpected call to happen. God not only wanted two old friends to be reunited, but for each of us to see how He had answered our prayers.

God has a way of arranging unexpected calls for us. Look at what God did for Moses as he approached the burning bush in curiosity. The last thing Moses expected was to hear God speak to him from the bush. A young Samuel experienced an unexpected call arranged by God one night too. Samuel served the priest Eli at a time in history when messages from God were very rare. One night Samuel was sleeping near the Ark of God when he suddenly heard his name being called out. Samuel thought Eli had called his name, but

the priest reassured him that he had not and told him to go back to bed. This sequence happened two more times before Eli realized it was God who was calling Samuel. Sure enough, when Samuel was awakened the fourth time by hearing his name called, he discovered that it was God all along.

These are just two examples from Scripture where God arranged unexpected calls to happen for people. Scripture is filled with stories like these. Sometimes God would speak directly to that person in these unexpected calls. Other times He would use an angel to speak on His behalf, and still other times it was a prophet or somebody else chosen by God. He very much loves to surprise us with unexpected calls that He has arranged. Sunday was an occurrence of God doing this for me and my colleague.

As I reflected upon this, I began to realize how many more people need what I experienced on Sunday. We have all lost touch with certain people during this pandemic. Prior to March 2020, there may have been friends we would get together with for coffee or lunch once a week, or once a month. Perhaps there were people we enjoyed seeing at church, or some club or activity we were part of. The pandemic has caused us to miss out on these experiences with dear friends. Just as my friend has been grieving as a result of her son's passing, we all have been going through grief losing contact with these friends. There is mention that restrictions will be lifted soon, and perhaps we will be able to resume some of these activities with friends, but why should we wait to reach out to them?

Maybe God has been nudging us to pick up the phone and call somebody we have not talked to for a very long time. Are we missing out on experiencing some surprise or blessing from that conversation God is nudging us to have? If we have been getting this nudge, let us follow my friend's courage and pick up the phone and make the call. If we have not felt this sense, then why not pray and ask God to place on our heart the name of somebody He would like us to call and reconnect with. This is a prayer that God will love to answer as He enjoys arranging for surprise calls to happen. I think reconnecting with a friend we have lost contact with is something we all need right now. The effort on our part to surprise them with a God inspired call will go a long way to putting a smile on their face and on ours as well. I sure appreciated this gift God gave me on Sunday, and so did my friend. I pray that we may all experience this same gift soon.

God Bless and Keep Safe

Pastor Dean

