

## WHAT A FATHER DID - WHAT OUR FATHER DOES

I officiated at a funeral service last Sunday afternoon. I usually have funeral services on other days of the week, but over the years I have had a few on Sunday afternoons. I did not know the deceased, but the family had been to a previous funeral I had done and asked if I would do this service. Three eulogies were included in this celebration of life. I always listen carefully to the eulogies to ensure the things I plan to say about the deceased match up with what those who know them best are sharing.

One of the people who spoke at this funeral was the deceased's daughter. My ears perked up when the daughter shared about her time at Brock University. I happened to do my understudy years there, so I know the university well. She shared how on the days she found challenging at Brock she would call her father, sometimes in tears. Whenever he received these calls from his daughter, this father would stop what he was doing and drive down to the university and bring her back home for the rest of the night. After being comforted spending a night at home in her own room, in the company of her parents, she shared how her father would turn around the next morning and drive her back to Brock so she would not miss any classes. By sharing this story and so many others, this daughter revealed so much about the character and nature of her father whom I had never met.

This daughter knew it was part of her father's character that he would always be there for her whenever she reached out for help on those difficult days at university. If we are going to turn to a person in a time of need it is so important that we know it is part of that individual's character to be dependable and reliable. Something The Bible does for us is to **reveal our Heavenly Father's character traits** so we will know that it is part of His nature to be reliable and dependable whenever we may reach out to Him. One passage that describes God's character traits to us is found in **Proverbs 15**. God is described in the following ways in this chapter from Proverbs:

- God is watching everywhere and is aware of everything (verse 3).
- God knows the hearts of all people (verse 11)
- God hears and delights in our prayers (verse 8)
- God loves those who obey Him and pursue godliness (verse 9)
- God cares for those who are poor and in need (verse 25)

These character traits reveal **how God knows us better than we know ourselves** and how **He delights** when we reach out to Him so He can show us His care. In **Proverbs 18:10** we also learn it is **part of our Heavenly Father's character** that we can **turn to Him for refuge and strength in our times of need**. This is what the Proverb reveals:

## **THE NAME OF THE LORD IS A STRONG FORTRESS; THE GODLY RUN TO HIM AND ARE SAFE.**

This daughter who gave such a beautiful eulogy on Sunday afternoon knew she could do this with her earthly father based on her understanding of his character and nature. Our Heavenly Father wants us to know that we can do the same thing with Him. Whether we are in school or university, in the work world, or in our retirement years we all have days when we struggle and need the guidance and assurance of our Heavenly Father. When we reach out to Him, like this father did for his daughter, God will:

- Come and be with us when we cry out to Him in despair,
- Take us away temporarily from our worries and troubles to comfort and strengthen us,
- Help us to feel at home in His loving and caring presence,
- Help us to re-enter our situation strengthened and renewed being able to face it again.

This daughter shared how experiencing this time away from her struggles at university in her father's presence helped give her the strength to persevere. Reaching out to our Heavenly Father and experiencing time away with Him to be renewed and strengthened is the key for us as well to be able to persevere through our difficult moments. I hope when we do this with our Heavenly Father that we may follow in this daughter's example and share our stories with others. Just as eulogies at a funeral help us to get to know the deceased better, our stories about how our Heavenly Father has been so reliable and dependable in our lives will help others to get to know His character. Our story might just be the seed that begins to take root in that person's heart to help them to reach out to God for help knowing it is part of His nature that we can always faithfully rely and depend on Him.

I am so thankful this daughter shared this story. Her story confirmed for me that I had the right message in my meditation to offer hope and comfort to those who were grieving. Her story also confirmed for me I am blessed to have a Heavenly Father who does these things for me whenever I reach out to Him. I hope this message confirms for each one of us **we are blessed to have a Heavenly Father** we can do this with.

**Take Care and God Bless**

**Pastor Dean**