



WHAT MATTERS?

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What Matters?

Week Five ~Working The Family Business

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy (1 Peter 2:9-10)

Day One: Building with Love

“Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart, since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God” (1 Peter 1:22).

Just prior to the Civil War a strong young slave named Ben sat on the bench in the open market in New Orleans. As Ben waited his turn to be shown and auctioned off his thoughts plunged him into deep sorrow. He remembered as a child watching his father worked to death in the field. At ten he was taken from his mother and sold for \$25.00 on the block. Now, he was being sold again along with his wife and little son. Anger, mixed with shame and helplessness burned in his heart at the thought of once again having his family torn from him.

Ben's turn on the block came all too soon. Looking back at his wife and baby he climbed the platform steps and took his place next to the well-dressed auctioneer. The bidding began high and raised quickly—\$300, \$350, \$400. One man, bidding louder and more fervently than the others shouted, “\$1500.” No one bid again. Fifteen hundred dollars was the most any one had ever paid for a slave. Ben climbed down the steps and approached his new master. “Well sir,” he said bitterly, “where do you want me to start slaving?”

The buyer looked at Ben, smiled, and said, “Friend, I did not pay \$1500 for you to be my slave. I paid that money to set you free and I plan to do the same for your wife and baby.” Ben's anger changed in a flash to sheer joy. He was free, not just from the chains of cruel slave owners, but from the chains of his own embittered soul. This unconditional act of love on the part of a complete stranger enabled him to love and trust others once again. He was given a new life.

Peter describes a similar story of ransom in his letter to scattered Christians. His words are also directed to you and me. “[You] were ransomed from the

futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot (1 Peter 1:18-19). Jesus precious blood ransomed us from futile lives of slavish self-service to purposeful lives of loving service as Royal Priests under God.

St. Peter continues, *“Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart, since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God.”* “Put your new life to work,” Peter tells us, *“[by loving] one another earnestly from a pure heart.”* We may not have the opportunity or the ability to love as extravagantly as the man who purchased freedom for Ben and his family but we can still invest ourselves in other people so that they may grow physically, emotionally, and spiritually. *“Love builds up,”* St. Paul reminds us. Building one another up in love is our service to each other in the Body of Christ—growing each other—our children, grandchildren, spouses, and others for whom we have direct responsibility—helping each other grow to reach the full potential our Lord intends—*“to mature manhood”* as St. Paul calls it, *“to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.”*

Like Ben, we may be enslaved by some besetting sin, or by crippling guilt, or the lasting effects of abuse. Perhaps we’ve experienced the death of a loved one or a broken relationship. A few weeks ago we looked at several factors that cause our lives to become stuck with no way out. Often, we lack the resources to get unstuck and move forward with the new life God purchased for us in Christ. That’s when we really need Christ’s restoring love, and that’s where we find our opportunity to serve. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, in his classic book *Life Together* wrote, “I need my brother because of Christ.” He went on to explain that our hearts are often puffed up with pride and self-centeredness, or they are weighed down by guilt and doubt. In either case they get stuck and are unable to look to Christ for help. So our Lord comes to us in the loving words of another brother or sister. They are able to speak a word from God that we need. It may be a word that humbles us, so that we do not think of ourselves more highly than we should. Or it may be a word that encourages and builds us up in love. Either way, Jesus comes personally to us in the words of our fellow Christians. That’s why we need them.

“Speaking the truth in love,” writes St. Paul, *“we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body joined together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working*

*properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love”
(Ephesians 4:15-16)*

Prayer: Lord Jesus, You have redeemed us with Your precious blood, suffering and death. Let us live in Your kingdom serving our brothers and sisters in Your body. Amen.

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Day Two: Rebuilding in Love

Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins (1 Peter 4:8).

A different kind of investment

Yesterday we talked about investing ourselves in growing or building other people to maturity as it is measured in our Lord Jesus—bearing much fruit. More often than not, *building* people up has mostly to do with *rebuilding* them and that’s an investment too, a very expensive one.

“*Love covers a multitude of sins,*” Peter tells us. Covering sins is love’s most powerful and effective work; it’s the foremost business of our priesthood. Such love, however, has a price tag. Forgiveness always costs. “Wait a minute!” you might protest. “Weren’t we taught that forgiveness is a free gift from God offered to us unconditionally, even without our asking? What’s the cost?”

Forgiveness is free, but only to the one being forgiven. It always costs the one who forgives. In teaching the “Lord’s Prayer” to his disciples, our Lord referred to our sins as debts: “*Forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors.*” His was pointing out that when we sin against someone we essentially take something precious away from them. As such, we become indebted to them. As with all debts, we are obligated to restore the loss we’ve caused by repaying it in some way. Forgiveness literally cancels the debt, or more true, transfers the debt from the one who sinned to the one who must forgive. The one who forgives gives up his right and opportunity to recover his loss. He removes the obligation to restore the loss from the debtor and places the obligation upon himself. That’s the expensive part.

It’s also the essential part. That is, it’s the essential part of restoring the relationship. That’s what’s really at stake in covering the sins of one another. It’s not about cosmic ledgers and balance sheets; it’s about personal relationships between ourselves and the Lord, and between ourselves and others. When we sin, we drive a wedge between ourselves and the ones against whom we sin. As long as the debt remains, the wedge remains. Restoring the relationship requires restoring the loss—paying the debt. The power to restore belongs, not to the debtor, but to the one who suffered loss.

That's why Peter exhorts us, "*Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins.*"

Such love seems one sided and, at least humanly speaking, impossible. Humanly speaking it is. The Scribes were right when they asked, "Who can forgive sins but God?" Forgiveness is unique to God's character, for "*God is love.*" Our Lord, while on earth, didn't even claim the right or authority to forgive sins, except that it had been given to Him by His Father (Matthew 9, 28). Ultimately, then, covering sins is something only God can do, or, *something only God can pay*. So, God obligated Himself to restore all of our debts of sin in order that our relationship with Him and one another might be restored. We know the price tag: the life of His own Son. The price was paid: One for all, once for all. Our sins covered, forever.

That brings us to Peter's call for us to love by covering the debt of those who have sinned against us. The question is, "How important are these relationships to us?" Being restored to a right relationship with God by God, we have the authority to restore the relationships with those who have broken them by sinning against us. Transformed by our baptism into Jesus' death and resurrection we now possess both the desire and ability to cover their sins and by so doing invest in rebuilding people in Christ.

Covering sins has an incredible price tag, but it's been paid in full by the precious blood of our Lord. While covering the sins of our brothers or sisters has a price tag for us, it is one we well can afford, since we pay it always and only out of the inexhaustible account of Christ's love and merit for all.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, You paid our debts with the life blood of Your Son restoring us to You. As You have forgiven us, let us forgive those who have sinned against us reconciling them to us. Amen.

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Day Three: Making Connections, Part 1 (Prayer)

“First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and for all in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all” (1 Timothy 2:1-5).

In our devotions last week we suggested that Royal Priests serve as connectors. They connect our God, who desires to forgive and restore, with broken people who need His healing touch. Priests do two things to connect God and people: they pray for those who cannot pray for themselves, and proclaim light to those still in darkness. Today we consider our service of prayer.

Moses records in Genesis 18 a most tender story of priestly partnership between the Lord and His people. He had just visited Abraham and Sarah to announce that, even in the old age, they would soon be the proud parents of the baby boy. As the Lord took His leave, Abraham walked along side Him for a while. It was then that God asked Himself a question, *“Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth will be blessed in him?” (Genesis 18:17-18).* The answer was obviously, “No.” What hung in the balance were the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. *“The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great and their sin is very grave,”* God told Abraham. *“I will go down to see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry that come to me. And if not, I will know.”*

God wasn't simply giving Abraham His travel plans. He was inviting him into his personal counsel. God wanted Abraham to talk to Him about what He was about to do, to join Him in what He is doing in the world. Here was a divine invitation to connect sinful people deserving nothing but God's wrath and punishment with a God Who desires only to save.

The Lord extends that same invitation to us. As Lutheran Christians, we emphasize the fact that God invites and leads us to pray. Our hymnals refer

to our Sunday morning worship service as the “Divine Service,” focusing on our Lord’s leading role in our worship life. *He comes to us* personally with His gifts of grace and mercy. And, as is His nature and habit, *He comes through us* to the rest of His world. The church in prayer for the world most reflects our Lord’s presence and leadership in our priestly worship. St. Paul urged, *of first or highest importance*, that the Christians in Ephesus offer “*supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings . . . for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions.*” He went on to explain that such prayer “*is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.* He capped off his instructions with these precious words, “*For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all.*”

St. Paul tells us that our Lord Jesus, who redeemed all people, continues to minister to the world as its mediator. As the first and highest of the Royal Priests, He stands between God and the world and in that place prays to His Father in behalf of the world. As is the work of any priest, Jesus prays for those who are not able to pray themselves. Since they do not know their heavenly Father, they’re not able to talk personally to Him. But Jesus knows His Father and He knows His Father’s heart that desires all people be saved. So He prays.

What’s fascinating is that Jesus personally mediates for the world through the hearts and lips of His church at prayer. There is a direct connection between St. Paul’s statement that “*there is one mediator between God and men,*” and his urging, “*supplications prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people.*” Jesus prays in the prayers of His people. That’s why it is so important that the church at prayer learn to pray with the heart of her Lord, *who gave Himself as a ransom for all.*

Just as He invited Abraham to intercede for the nations thousands of years ago, He invites us to intercede for the nations today. Who are those in our community that are disconnected from God? What groups of people, good or bad, need prayer? Take a close look at our prayers in worship and ask ourselves, “How many of our prayers are directed to God in behalf of those who cannot pray for themselves?” If we find that the unsaved are not on our priestly radar screen, then, let’s make a simple change and include them. Such change will be “*good and pleasing in the sight of God*” to be sure.

Prayer: Lord God Almighty, You gave Jesus as our high priest who prays our prayers before You. May we come to You with the needs of those who cannot pray for themselves so they may come to know You. Amen.

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Day Four: Making Connections, Part 2, (Sharing the Hope)

“[In] your hearts regard Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience” (1 Peter 3:15-16).

What makes you and your family different from those people and families that are not Christian? Do you have fewer problems? Do you have less worry or stress? Are your family relationships smoother? How about sin; do you sin less than nonChristians? What makes you different?

Perhaps a better way of asking the question is, “What difference does Christ make in your life, or your family, or your other relationships?” Why is He important to you? As you ask yourself these questions and honestly answer them you will put personal definition to what St. Peter calls “*the hope that is within you.*”

In some ways we are no different from those who do not know Christ. We experience the same set backs, hardships, and crises in every life. We can become anxious and afraid when we face difficulties or challenges that are bigger than we are to handle. Yet, as Christians, we can face them with hope. A sure hope that is anchored in Jesus.

A friend of mine’s faithful ministry as a pastor came to a screeching halt one day as he resigned from his parish. He had experienced an emotional breakdown. After a number of years he was asked by a neighboring congregation to serve as their pastor. He reluctantly agreed. He continued to be plagued by his emotional problems, feeling guilty for the fact that he had this flaw or crack in his personality, until one morning he was reading St. Paul’s words in 2 Corinthians 4, “*But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us.*” He discovered that it was through his very weaknesses that God intended to touch other people with the healing power of the Gospel.

Soon afterward a young mother came to talk to him. She, too, had suffered an emotional breakdown. She poured her heart out to him, confessing her feelings of guilt for not being able to live the “triumphant Christian life” and allowing the problems of her everyday world to get her down. My friend

asked her, “May I share with you what our Lord Jesus is doing in my life as I battle these same kind of emotional hurts?”

“Pastor,” she responded with surprise, “I did not know that you had these problems, you seem so full of faith and hope.”

“I have real hope,” he answered, “but it’s not a hope that I created for myself. It’s hope that comes from God Himself. It’s anchored not in me or how I feel, but in what God did for you and me on the cross. He bound us to Him forever and promised that absolutely nothing in this world would be able to separate us from His love. Everyday He meets me where I am and puts me to work in the lives of other people. Instead of being constantly ashamed of my emotional struggles I am learning that He uses them as a way to touch others with His love.”

Sharing the “*hope that was within him*” touched her spirit deeply. That conversation began a healing process in her heart and mind that changed her life.

I visited my friend a few months later. He could not contain the joy of seeing Christ’s love transform another person’s life. “I see it now,” he said. “Jars of clay, cracked and marred with imperfection don’t hold water very well. It always leaks out. So with us. We’ve been given an incredible treasure of God’s love and grace. The very nature of this treasure means that it’s supposed to flow through the cracks in my own life to touch others similarly broken.”

Again I ask the question: What difference does Christ make in your life, or your family, or your other relationships? What difference does He make especially in those areas of your life that you would call “broken?” It’s in those places where our hope, born of the Gospel, is meant to do its encouraging work.

We may think other people have all the resources they need to make it in life and succeed as people, spouses, parents, students, etc. We’re the only ones that are struggling. That’s simply not true. They, like us, are broken jars of clay. The question is whether or not their jar is filled with the hope of God’s love in Jesus Christ. Your jar is. And that makes all the difference. For the sake of those who have no hope, let yours leak.

Prayer: Gracious Father, we are broken and cracked thinking we are of no value or use to You. By Your outpouring of forgiveness let Your treasure of love pour out to others. Amen.

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Day Five: Making Connections: Part 3, (Where do I begin?)

“Always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience.” (1 Peter 3:15-16)

“Dad,” my daughter asked me one day, “I have a friend who is not churched at all. I want to share the Gospel with her, but I’m not sure where to start. Where do you begin?” I commended her for her honest question, knowing that she is not alone. I would venture a wager that most, if not all of us, have wanted to share the Gospel with someone we know, but we don’t know where to begin.

Years ago, when “Evangelism Explosion” was popular, the starting place was simple: We asked, “If you were to die tonight, would you go to heaven?” Then, we followed up with a second question, “If you died tonight and found yourself standing before God on His throne and He asked you, ‘Why should I let you into my heaven?’ What would you say?” Those were the days when the eternal concerns of the church were shared by our general society. The heaven questions seemed to be on peoples’ minds, so they made a natural and effective starting place for Gospel witness and defending the “*hope that is in you*”.

Those days are gone for the most part. The church today does not play a significant role in framing the real questions people are asking. We Christians, therefore, don’t get to determine the starting places for conversations about faith and God. That may make us very uncomfortable. Feelings of insecurity rise up within us and, as often as not, prevent us from speaking of the hope within us. We resign ourselves to the notion that witnessing our faith is the business of professionals, people trained to tell the story. My daughter’s question is real, “Dad, you witness all the time. Where do you begin if you want to tell someone about Jesus?”

The good news is that the starting place is not for us to determine. The choice belongs to the non-Christian. It rests in his or her life, not yours or mine. Often, the questions they’re asking have more to do with this world, than they do with the next. They are questions and concerns about the things in their world that don’t work well, that are broken. They are about relation-

ships and hopes, fears and insecurities, losses and grief in the here and now. The here and now of a non-Christian's world is the perfect place to begin. The here and now of the non-Christian was where Jesus usually began in His own ministry. The same thing is true of Christ's Apostles. If you read their sermons in the Acts of the Apostles, you'll see that all of them started with a question or concern of the hearers. By the power and guidance of the Holy Spirit, the disciples used the questions of the unbeliever to speak of the Gospel of Jesus. They had no need to control the starting place of the conversation. They knew that the Holy Spirit would lead them from there to the cross of Jesus Christ and His empty tomb.

Something else the disciples understood and depended upon in their witness. Jesus was intensely interested in the life and world of the unbeliever. They saw Him going out of His way to meet nonChristians where they lived in their world. The disciples finally grasped the fact that Jesus came into this world to seek and to save those who were lost. So, they did the same. They deliberately lived, worked, and shared conversations in the world of the unbeliever and watched the Holy Spirit provide the opportunities. They also learned to pay attention. That is, they learned to focus their attention on the world and lives of those who were lost and broken. They opened their eyes to see their hurt and their ears to listen to their cries. In so doing they discovered the answer to my daughter's question, "Dad, where do I begin?"

Prayer: Lord Jesus, open our eyes to see the needs of those in our neighborhood; open our ears to listen to their hurts; and give us the words that point to the help in You. Amen.

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Day Six: My Gifts, Focused on others

“As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace . . . in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ.” (1 Peter 4:10).

What’s your gift? That was a question asked frequently some years ago at the height of the so-called “Charismatic Movement in American churches.” Pastors and people busied themselves with discovering what special gifts each of them had received from the Holy Spirit and how they could be used in ministry. Bible classes were conducted to teach about spiritual gifts; special tools and inventories were developed to assist people in the process of discovering which gifts they possessed. The desire to learn about spiritual gifts and to know what gifts each member had been given by the Holy Spirit was God pleasing. The fact that each Christian had been given particular gifts by God revealed another facet of His incredible love, goodness, and creativity. God is the giver of all good things.

Discussions regarding “Gifts of the Holy Spirit” show up in a number of places in the New Testament which suggests that they are a big deal to God. They are. God loves to give gifts to His children. Each gift that He gives is personal and deliberately chosen for each person. You know the joy you have in choosing gifts for your loved ones during the Christmas season. You select each gift with care, always with the recipient in mind. Your gifts are statements of love and relationship. The same holds true with our heavenly Father. When He made us His own children in the waters of Holy Baptism, He also gave us His Holy Spirit. His Spirit came to us along with particular and personal gifts. The Spirit and the gifts that He has given to us mark our place and purpose in the Family Business. No person has been forgotten; no gift is insignificant.

Where the “What’s your gift?” question sometimes goes awry is when it focused the discovering of spiritual gifts on the wrong purpose, or maybe I should say, the wrong people. “What’s your gift?” was often followed up with the statement, “I have such and such gift.” The problem lay with the word “I.” Too often it drew the attention from the giver and intention of God’s gifts and centered it instead on the one to whom the gift was given. “I have the gift of teaching,” or “I have the gift of mercy.” In each case the gift

was being used to build or maybe even “puff” up the possessor, rather than be put to work as God intended.

Spiritual gifts are given by God to bring us joy. That joy, however, is only realized as we put our gifts to work in serving others. The ultimate purpose of the gift is not in serving the person who has it but serving the people who need God’s personal ministry. God uses our Spiritual Gifts to connect with other people and their needs. They make up a giant system of thousands of different pipelines that connect God’s resources with people in need. He connects with a person in need of mercy through a person whom He has gifted with mercy. He connects with a person or group that needs help in making a difficult decision with a person whom He has gifted with wisdom. And so it goes with each and every need. God supplies through people He has gifted. *“There are varieties of gifts,”* St. Paul tells us, *“but the same Spirit; . . . there are varieties of activities but the same God who empowers them all in everyone.”*

That’s why St. Peter instructs us, *“As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another.”* He calls us to employ our gifts as *“good stewards of God’s varied grace.”* One of the several definitions of “steward” that Webster’s dictionary gives is, “an officer on a ship who is in charge of stores and culinary arrangements.” His business is managing and distributing the food and other resources on board. It includes responsibility for the careful use of those stores keeping in mind the needs of the other crewmembers and passengers. Spiritual gifts come from the bountiful stores of God’s grace. They never run out, so we can be lavish in our distribution.

Grace is the operative word here. Someone once defined GRACE as “God’s Riches At Christ’s Expense.” That makes it clear. The Spiritual Gifts we received were purchased at a dear price. Not one of gold or silver, Peter tells us elsewhere, *“but with the precious blood of Christ.”* Grace also defines the purpose of our gifts. Through these gifts, God comes to broken people with the restoring power of His Gospel.

So, “What’s your gift?” That’s a very good question. A good place to start, however, in discovering the gifts the Holy Spirit gave you is to ask a different question, “Who is in need?” If you were kept awake some night thinking about other people in need, who would come to mind? What needs would come to mind? Would you think about the children in your neighborhood that do not know Jesus? Would you think about people in our community who do not have proper food or clothing? Would you think about people who are lonely, or need assistance with everyday tasks? Would you think about people in Africa or other places who are ravaged by

malnutrition or disease? Who would come to your mind? Chances are, that's the starting place for finding the precious gifts our Father gave you in His Son.

Prayer: Dear Father, You have made us Yours in Jesus Christ. You have also given us gifts to serve others. Let us respond as we see their needs in Jesus' Name. Amen.

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Day Seven: Even the least of these

“Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you” (1 Peter 5:5-6).

One day, as men often do, Jesus’ disciples were going on about which one of them was the greatest. So Jesus took a little boy and placed him by his side. He told his friends, *“Whoever receives this child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me receives him who sent me. For he who is least among you all is the one who is greatest (Luke 9:48).* Jesus was giving them a lesson on humility, patiently teaching them to stop needing to be a somebody in their own eyes in order to truly matter to Jesus. “You see,” He told them, “this little boy, whom you didn’t even notice while you were arguing, matters to me. You considered him insignificant, but He does great things for Me.” And he did. We do not know the identity of the little boy Jesus talked about that day, but He employed him to teach an essential lesson to the great Apostles of the Church. No one is too small or insignificant to hold an essential position in the Family Business.

I served part of my pastoral internship in a farming community in central Illinois. One Sunday after worship my wife and I were invited over to one of the member family’s home for dinner. After the meal the owner of the farm took me out for a tour of his new barn and new John Deer tractor that he had bought. That tractor was huge. His oldest son, about four years old at the time came along with us. “Son,” his father said, “tomorrow I’m going to use this new tractor to get our fields ready to plant. Do you want to come along? We have to get up really early, long before the sun comes up.”

The little boy’s eyes grew as big as saucers at the thought of riding in that giant tractor with his dad. I don’t think he slept all night just thinking about the next day. He was up at 4:00 a.m. with his dad, pulled on his coveralls and hurried out to the barn. He watched his dad hook up the farm implements to the tractor and then climbed into the big cab with him. Dad fired the great big tractor up and began to pull out of the barnyard. Before he had driven a hundred yards, his little boy had fallen fast asleep in his lap. He stayed asleep all morning while dad worked on.

It didn't really matter. His son's little hands could barely grip the bottom of the steering wheel. His feet came nowhere near the pedals on the floor. And he had no idea what all the levers and buttons operated. For all intents and purposes, his son was not much help.

I've asked people, whenever I've told this story, whether the father needed his little guy that day to help him in the fields. Most of time people shake their heads, "No." But if you asked his father you would get a completely different answer. Without hesitation he would tell you, "Of course I did." He'd continue, "I didn't need him to steer the tractor, or to push all the levers. I can do that just fine. Besides, that will come in time as he grows up. I needed him with me in the tractor because he makes everything I do worthwhile. He's my son. And it means the world to have him by my side and sharing what I am growing out in those fields. He matters."

If an earthly father desires to include his children in his business, how much more does our Heavenly Father. His Fatherly love builds, empowers, operates, and directs the Family Business. In that love no one is too small or insignificant to serve or to have the opportunity to make a godly difference in this world.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, You chose us. We did not choose You. Help us grow in Your mercy, so we may serve those You want to save. Amen.