

LETTERS FROM GRANDPA

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Dearest grandchild,

Today's letter will deal with a familiar Scripture that is often used in funerals. Jesus said to His disciples on the night before Calvary: **"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also"** (Jn. 14:1-3 KJV).

The Greek word translated as "mansions" in this passage is "mone". It is only found two times in the Bible. First in John 14:2 where it is translated as "mansions" and secondly in John 14:23 where it is translated as "abode". **"Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him"**.

THUS WHILE JESUS IS PREPARING A "MANSION" FOR US IN HEAVEN, WE ARE PREPARING AN "ABODE" FOR HIM IN OUR HEARTS!

When preparing for a human guest it is common to hurriedly sweep and clean in an effort to fool our guest that make him believe we are a better house keeper than we really are. Jesus is not impressed by such hypocrisy. He knows exactly what kind of a person we are and is not deceived by a thin veneer of respectability (Jn. 2:25). Jesus once told of two men who went up to the temple to pray (Lk. 18:9-14). One was a proud Pharisee and the other was a humble tax collector. The Pharisee bragged about his righteousness, but the tax collector was so ashamed of his sins that he would not even look up to heaven. Instead he **"beat his breast and said 'God have mercy on me a sinner'"**. As you know, it was the sinful tax collector who was justified by God **"For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted"**.

Please consider these inspired words of Isaiah: **"For this is what the high and lofty One says – he who lives forever, whose name is holy: 'I live in a high and holy place, but also with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite.'" (Is. 57:15)**. God not only lives in the purity of the high and holy places in heaven, he also lives in the hearts of sinners who are lowly and contrite. The Hebrew word for "contrite" is "dakka". It comes from the root which means to "crumble" or "be crushed". Truly **"The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit"** (Ps. 34:18 KJV).

In 1835 H.V. Elliott planned a charity bazaar to raise money for the daughters of preachers who were in need. At that time his sister Charlotte was suffering from a serious bout of low self esteem. She even came to question the reality of her own relationship with God. As she lay upon her sofa struggling to reclaim the reality of her salvation, she pushed aside her own emotions and concentrated on the promises of Scripture. Then she took a pen and wrote one of the most memorable hymns in history - "Just as I am without one plea but that thy blood was shed for me". This is the way everyone should come to Christ. We cannot fool Christ by hurriedly cramming clothes in the closet and sweeping dust under the rug. Christ wants us to be honest! He actually prefers that we come to him "just as we are". Remember! **"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and contrite heart"** (Ps. 51:17).

Man looks on the outward appearance, but God looks on the heart (1 Sam. 16:7). When God sees someone worship He knows exactly what they are thinking. Sadly, not all worshipers are thinking good thoughts. So Isaiah reveals that God sees clearly the hypocrisy that man cannot discern. Note: **“But whoever sacrifices a bull is like one who kills a man, and whoever offers a lamb, like one who breaks a dog’s neck; whoever makes a grain offering is like one who presents pig’s blood, and whoever burns memorial incense, like one who worships an idol” (Is. 66:3).** In the eyes of God not all worshipers are as spiritual as they appear to be!

Please note the first two verses of that chapter: **“This is what the Lord says: ‘Heaven is my throne, where is the house you will build for me? Where will my resting place be? Has not my hand made all these things, and so they came into being?’ declares the Lord. This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word” (Isaiah 66:1-2).**

The point is that rather than try to impress God with how holy we are, we need to be like the Prodigal Son and confess: **“Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son” (Lk. 15:21).** Such honesty delighted the Father and he said: **“Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let’s have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found” (Lk. 15:22-24).** God will also delight in our honesty.

The church at Laodicea had many problems. It was lukewarm, and needed to repent. In the eyes of “men”, however, they were “rich, and increased with goods, and in need of nothing.” In the eyes of “God” they were “wretched, poor, miserable, blind, and naked”. Jesus said to them: **“Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him and he with me”. (Rev. 3:20).** It is not necessary to hurry and clean the house before you open the door and invite Jesus in. He actually prefers that you receive Him “just as you are”!

I love you,

Grandpa Boyce