

Please pray with me...

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing to you, O LORD my rock and my redeemer.

Amen

Psalm 19:14

Growing Faith

Father's Day 2019

When I think of Father's Day - Of course, I think of my own father who at 88 years young, is still leading our family as a loving patriarch, and of course I think of my wonderful husband Bob who continues to be a terrific father to our kids. But as I have grown in my faith, I have come to think of Father's Day in a new way, I think of my heavenly father. He is the one who first loved us and taught us what love is. We don't earn His approval, he has created us, cares for us and loves us right where we are. He desires us to come to Him, spend time with Him and grow in our love of him, He is the perfect Father. One of the sweetest gifts I receive from my father is handwritten notes in a script I remember from childhood which I *slowly* learned to decipher...or

sweet phone messages when I've missed his call. Like my father, most fathers want the best for their children but from our heavenly Father we receive the best gift of all ~ Grace, through His son Jesus Christ. And just as we are excited to share the joys of receiving a special gift from a loved one, He wants us to share the gift of faith with others along the way. So how do we do that? It doesn't always look the same for everyone, as each of us has our own God-given gifts. I used to pray that as a teacher, I would be able to reach each child in my classroom no matter what they were struggling with, and my Mom frequently reminded me that I couldn't "save" them all... but I'm only human, I needed His help and guidance. We can't do everything...and God certainly doesn't need *our* help! But be assured that God *will* meet you where you are and use you to share His faith if you are willing.

Think about yourself as a child. You know, without even being able to remember the exact "lessons", we were all taught that it was good and right to share our toys with others. Toys...a happy thought to a child, well to anyone. Toys are still toys no matter how old we are! So, if we were taught to share our toys, why wouldn't we be willing to share other things, even

intangible things that could bring others joy and happiness? Just simply tell his story, share your own story through Him. Here I am, truly a humble servant being allowed the chance to ask you to do this for God.

In the parable of the growing seed which Alicia read from Mark chapter 4, we learn about the kingdom of God in the world. However, it's not just about the world but about the growth of the individual believer as well, and then in turn the kingdom of God. I can relate to this parable... Those of you who really know me, know that when Spring comes and it's time to plant, I'm so so happy! Though I don't always begin with seeds, it still thrills me to dig in the dirt, feed and nurture each small plant we've researched and chosen for our yard, and then watch it grow and flourish throughout the Spring and Summer and into the Fall. Yes, often the age-old comment about the "green" vs the "brown" thumb comes up. No, not every plant does indeed flourish, but thankfully most of them do quite well. I enjoy sharing the love of gardening with others and learning from friends who love gardening as I do, even though some friends swear they just don't have luck with growing plants. But in reality, God is the Master Gardener, He makes the seed to

sprout, to grow roots, to show forth it's beauty over time. We may plant, and water, and pray but He is the master designer, He is the source of light and life, and He is reflected in the beauty of my garden.

Planting the “seed” for the kingdom of God has nothing at all to do with luck or coincidence, but everything to do with blessings! We may plant the seeds, but do we stand by every hour of the day or night and watch over it waiting for it to grow? No! We of faith know that God is always “there”. Yes, God appreciates our efforts as we water and do a bit of nurturing for what we have planted, but He thankfully sends rain and more nurturing than we could ever imagine. The bottom line is, we don't know what truly happens because it isn't in our control. God gives the growth! Or as Paul said about the growth of faith among the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 3:6-7, “I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. ⁷So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow.”

It's not easy, but we must listen to God and help others be the treasure they never imagined they could be! How many times have we been trying to listen for what God is calling us to do but

instead think, “This couldn’t be it, could it?” Stop waiting for the huge moment...for that earth-shattering story...the Road to Damascus story of Paul’s if you will...He is ready to use you for growing His kingdom now! And remember, we are better together, each in our own way. Plant the seed by sharing His story through loving and encouraging words. Plant the seed through your arms and feet that do His work, that comfort the downtrodden, that bring food to the hungry and that comfort the weary. Share Him by doing what He is calling you to do now, where you are. In your home, at work, in the garden. Be the child that reflects His goodness and grace and love, and let God do the rest.

But please don’t be mistaken friends...listen to this devotional taken from one of my favorite Christian authors, Max Lucado’s book [The Applause of Heaven](#).

There are certain things you can do that no one else can, and you are alive to do them. But there’s a canyon of difference between doing your best to glorify God and doing whatever it takes to glorify yourself. The quest for excellence is a mark of maturity. The quest for power is childish.

The first power play happened in a garden. A promise of prestige was whispered with a hiss by a fallen angel. Eve swallowed the hook. The temptation to be like God eclipsed her view of God. Absolute power is unreachable. The pole of power is greasy.

Jesus said, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God” (Matthew 5:9). Which would you prefer? To be king of the mountain for a day? Or to be a child of God for eternity?

Now, as we honor our Father’s today, let us truly honor our heavenly Father by listening to what he is asking us to do, pray about it and plant the seeds to grow not only our own faith but that of His kingdom.