

A Father's Dream for His Son!

"Listen to me, you islands; hear this, you distant nations: Before I was born the LORD called me; from my birth he has made mention of my name. He made my mouth like a sharpened sword, in the shadow of his hand he hid me; he made me into a polished arrow and concealed me in his quiver. He said to me, 'You are my servant, Israel, in whom I will display my splendor.' But I said, 'I have labored to no purpose; I have spent my strength in vain and for nothing. Yet what is due me is in the LORD'S hand, and my reward is with my God.' And now the LORD says—he who formed me in the womb to be his servant to bring Jacob back to him and gather Israel to himself, for I am honored in the eyes of the LORD and my God has been my strength—he says: 'It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth.'"

Let's admit it, parents, it is hard not to get involved in the lives of our kids. We want them to succeed. We want them to do well, better than we did. We have dreams for them. Dads, admit it, the first time you took your son to T-Ball, you had a flash, a thought of your son being drafted as a rookie in the major leagues. What dreams do you have for your children? Maybe we want them to follow in your footsteps. Maybe you hope they don't follow in your footsteps as they might find a better life. We dream they find the right spouse and have successful kids.

God the Father is no different. He has dreams and hopes for his son, Jesus Christ. Our text is very interesting. It is from Isaiah chapter 49, which means it is written seven hundred years before Jesus would be born. You heard of red lettered editions of the Bible. Anything Jesus said would be printed in red. Though written long before his birth, most of this chapter could be printed in red letters because it is Jesus speaking to his Father. And in it we see God the Father's dreams for his Son. And what are those dreams? First, that Jesus grows up to be the Father's servant, and second, that he grows up to save the entire world.

I. God dreams Jesus would be his Servant.

There was a time when sons simply worked the same job their fathers worked. We assume Jesus was a carpenter because his father was a carpenter. Not today. Few sons take over their dad's business. Instead, we have a whole wide world of opportunities available to us.

But Jesus did not have a wide world of opportunities before him. God had a plan, a dream for Jesus, and Jesus had no choice. ***"Before I was born the LORD called me; from my birth he has made mention of my name. He made my mouth like a sharpened sword, in the shadow of his hand he hid me; he made me into a polished arrow and concealed me in his quiver."*** "Called," a "calling". It is something we are destined for. Before Jesus was born of the virgin Mary, even before creation, God already determined what his Son would be. He even picked out his name as he told Mary and Joseph through Gabriel.

God laid out Jesus' life to the smallest detail, and Jesus didn't mind it at all. Jesus did not have dreams of playing in the major leagues or becoming a brain surgeon or firefighter. He had only one ambition. He tells us in John 6, ***"For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me."*** All Jesus wanted was to do exactly what his Father wants. If I announced that I picked the women my sons would marry, and I picked them when my sons were one year old, most of the free United States would boo and hiss at me.

Not Jesus. ***"And now the LORD says—he who formed me in the womb to be his servant to bring Jacob back to him and gather Israel to himself, for I am honored in the eyes of the LORD and my God has been my strength ..."*** He tells the free United States to stay out of it. It is an honor for him to do what God wants. And what is that dream? That Jesus serve God as our savior. It would be the dirtiest job ever, coming to take on the sins of the whole world, paying for it with his own life, even going to hell for them, literally. But the Father's will was his will, and it is an honor for him to do exactly what his Father wanted.

The concept of servant is almost foreign to us today. Few of us have servants and we usually don't want to be one. Rather, we want to choose whom we marry, when, what job to take and so on. Though we have choices and thank God for them, this idea of doing only what I want to do can be arrogant; if everyone adopted this attitude, no one would take care of grandma in the nursing because it is too demeaning and the pay is not all that good. We naturally want to do what is best for ourselves and not for others.

How do I know that? When I deal with any troubled relationship, someone has lost the servant mentality. They no longer are interested in what is best for the other person, or what he or she wants. It is all about me, myself and I. So, the relationship is strained because someone wants only what they can get out of it.

But not Jesus. It is an honor to do whatever the Lord wants, and what is best for us. And the Father equipped him for this. ***"He made my mouth like a sharpened sword, in the shadow of his hand he hid me; he made me into a polished arrow and concealed me in his quiver."*** We parents want to prepare our children for the day they leave home. We educate them, encourage them, teach them how to manage money, etc. Jesus was equipped by God. But his greatest gift was speaking the

very Word of God.

This makes me think of horseradish. I like horseradish, but I forget how strong it is and I often slobber on too much. Just a little is very potent. The power of God, the same power that created the universe with only a word, is hidden in Jesus. Yes, Jesus performed miracles, but it was his preaching that changed hearts, not miracles. Jesus didn't look like a great preacher. He didn't go to the great preacher schools. Yet he spoke God's Word. How powerful is his Word? It raised Lazarus from the dead. It stilled storms. It changes hearts. Imagine how powerful that Word is when connected with water in Baptism. His Word changes hearts.

You believe because you heard the Word of God for faith comes from hearing the message and the message is heard through the Word of Christ. Yes, this Jesus paid for our sins on the cross, but this would mean nothing to us unless his Word penetrates our hearts and changes us.

II. God dreams of Jesus saving the entire world.

Sadly, though, not everyone listened. Jesus admitted: ***"But I said, 'I have labored to no purpose; I have spent my strength in vain and for nothing.'*** When I read this, I thought of the feeding of the five thousand. We know how Jesus fed over five thousand people miraculously with five loaves of bread and two fish. But do you remember what happened the next day? They hung around and Jesus spoke to them. Yes, he could feed them lunch again, but that lasts only hours. He wanted to give them bread after which they will be satisfied for eternity. So he offered them the Bread of Life. He was talking of himself as their Savior. After that sermon, they all left, all but the twelve disciples. They were more interested in peanut butter sandwiches than eternal life.

Think of all the sermons he spoke. Think of the miracles he performed. One commentator estimated Jesus walked 25,000 miles during his ministry. That is enough to go around the world once. Think of all the labor and time and effort, and so few believed. He felt sad so many of his fellow Israelites believed, but he never gave up. ***"Yet what is due me is in the LORD'S hand, and my reward is with my God."*** Jesus still found a reward in all he did even if many rejected. Yes, his reward is a few still believed. But God the Father had another reward for him. ***He says: "It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth."*** God had a dream for Jesus, that he would save the world.

Yes, Jesus came first for the Israelites, in keeping with God's promise to Abraham. But God the Father didn't want to sacrifice his son on the cross for a few people. No, he wanted Jesus to save the rest of the world. I mean, a man doesn't go to medical school for eight or more years and accumulates a couple hundred thousand dollars of debt so he could perform one surgery to save his grandmother's life and then quit and works in a factory. I mean, that is noble, but he could so much more. As a surgeon he could save so many more lives. When Jesus died on the cross, he died not only for Israelites and his disciples and his mother, he died to pay for the sins of the entire world. This includes us! God dreamed of making us his children, and Jesus makes it happen.

"Listen to me, you islands; hear this, you distant nations." This is a message for the entire world. But it is not a message they want to hear and sadly so many don't listen. Why? Sinful humans don't see a need for a Savior. If I yelled out right now, "Run out this door to save yourselves," you will just sit there as you are doing now. That is because there are no flames or fire or explosion or anything. You have no need to run through that door to save yourselves. There is no danger.

If however you smelled smoke and saw flames, you'd run. Remember how it said Jesus words are like a sharp sword or polished arrow? They penetrate us deeply including exposing our sins. We try to hide our sins. We make excuses for them. But his Word destroys such excuses and exposes us as sinners. There is fire and death. We see it. But it also cuts and penetrates us in showing our Savior, the door out of a deathtrap to safety. In fact, we find more than safety; we find paradise through that door.

I have dreams for my children. God the Father had very high dreams for his Son, nothing less than to save the entire world. And God has dreams for us. Let's dream with him. Let's dream of walking into heaven, and let's have that same dream for our kids, family, everyone. Amen.