

God Is Seeking You in Love **John 3:14-21**

Fred Craddock tells the story of his father, who spent years of his life hiding from the God who was seeking him out:

“When the pastor used to come from my mother’s church to call on him, my father would say, ‘You don’t care about me. I know how churches are. You want another pledge, another name, right? Another name, another pledge, isn’t that the whole point of church? Get another name, another pledge.’

My nervous mother would run to the kitchen, crying, for fear somebody’s feelings would be hurt. When we had an evangelistic campaign the pastor would bring the evangelist, introduce him to my father and then say, ‘Sic him, get him! Sic him, get him!’ My father would always say the same thing. ‘You don’t care about me! Another name, another pledge. Another name, another pledge! I know about churches.’

I guess I heard it a thousand times. One time he didn’t say it. He was at the Veteran’s Hospital. He was down to 74 pounds. They had taken out the throat, put in a metal tube, and said, ‘Mr. Craddock, you should have come earlier. But this cancer is awfully far advanced. We’ll give radium, but we don’t know.’

I went in to see him. In every window—potted plants and flowers. Everywhere there was a place to set them—potted plants and flowers. Even in that thing that swings out over your bed they put food on, there was a big flower. There was by his bed a stack of cards 10 or 15 inches deep. I looked at the cards sprinkled in the flowers. I read the cards beside his bed. And I want to tell you, every card, every blossom, every potted plant from groups, Sunday School classes, women’s groups, youth groups, men’s bible class, of my mother’s church—every one of them. My father saw me reading them. He could not speak, but he took a Kleenex box and wrote something on the side from Shakespeare’s Hamlet. . . . He wrote on the side, ‘In this harsh world, draw your breath in pain to tell my story.’ I said, ‘What is your story, Daddy?’ And he wrote, ‘I was wrong.’”

It is not until you know God is seeking you in love, not in condemnation; it is not until that moment that the gospel becomes Good News for you.

God wants to shower you with love. The question is are you open to receiving such an extravagant love?

May our hearts be open to the love of God. May the love of God be real to us so that we might experience a love and peace that has no words to describe.

God bless,
Pastor Barbara