

Articles and Sermons :: **SAMUEL AND HIS CRIPPLED SON**

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SAMUEL AND HIS CRIPPLED SON

Samuel was a schoolmaster in a small city in central China. One night he overheard his head teacher praying. The teacher was saying, "Lord, please help Samuel to love his son. It's so sad the way he treats him so cruelly, cutting him off, refusing to spend time in the home, ashamed of his crippled boy. Lord, we don't know what goes on in the mind of his son, but we do know he is very sad. His wife says the boy weeps all the time when the father comes in and leaves. He may not know much, but he does know he's not loved, and doesn't know why he's not loved."

Deeply moved by the prayer, Samuel went home late that night and sat beside his sleeping son for hours, just stroking his hair and whispering, "Forgive me."

He took his son to school the next day and showed him a black book hidden in the school basement. His son suddenly cried out the word, "God!" and pointed at the book. The boy spoke very little, as his mouth was deformed, but the word was clear. He had said, "God."

Smiling, Samuel said, "You might be right, my son. We will read and see." And so every night Samuel stayed late at his son's bedside, reading him portions of scripture. He would hold his son with one hand, and hold the Bible with the other. When he had finished a page, he would signal to the boy, who loved to help by turning the page. They felt warm together. Soon his wife joined them for the readings, and the family grew closer and closer.

Samuel felt new feelings of love well up inside him as he read the truths of the Bible. He felt a power to love his son more and more. That's when tragedy struck. His boy was run over by a truck and badly injured. There was nothing the medics could do. They took him home to nurse him through to the end. Christians came and prayed for his healing, but the boy continued to deteriorate. By this time Samuel was praying to God, and crying out for Him to spare his son's life. But in December, after a sudden power failure, the boy finally died.

Samuel asked the Christians to hold a service for his boy. A pastor came and prayed, saying, "Lord, you knew this boy was going to die. How kind of you to reconcile father and son before he died. Thank you for your work of grace. And we thank you for your eternal work too. You watched your son, helpless in flesh, die and grow cold—all because you knew we could not love you otherwise, as we are so blind in our selfishness."

Samuel pondered the meaning of this prayer. He didn't understand it all. But he did get this; God had lost a Son too. Unlike Samuel, God lost a Son He had cherished, a Son that was perfect. How much harder for God.

He went to church the following Sunday, a small house church an hour's ride from the city. They were celebrating an event unknown to Samuel, called "Christmas." A banner in the makeshift church read, "The Son of God for the world in need."

Samuel testified on that very Sunday, "I see that I went through what God went through. He had a Son He loved, and watched Him die that life may come to everyone. I too had a son, but I did not love him. Then God broke my heart, so that I could love him. Then He took him. But I have life now, life that will last so long that one day I know I will be reunited with my son. And he will not be lame. And he will be able to speak. And we will fellowship together not in freezing rooms of fear and pain, but on beautiful planets of peace and harmony. I can love again, and this is joy for me. Even in my grief, with my poor son gone, I can love again. We can all love again."

RESPONSE

Today I will express my love for God even in the midst of pain and loss that I may have suffered.

PRAYER

Pray for people like Samuel who have suffered deeply and may feel God cannot forgive them.

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