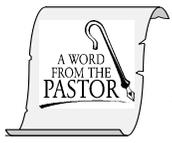




The Blanco Blessing

Blanco United Methodist Church

August 2018



“But now, O Lord, You are our Father, we are the clay, and You our potter; and all of us are the work of Your hand.” Isaiah 64:8

When I was in college I found a verse in the Bible that I really liked, Proverbs 27:17, *“Iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.”* I think I liked it because I thought it meant that God was going to use me to sharpen other people. In time I discovered that it more accurately described God’s usage of family, friends, and neighbors to sharpen me and shape my character. Time, circumstances and relationships are important ingredients to the shaping of character. While everyone around us would benefit from each of us becoming more and more mature, God’s goal goes beyond maturity to Christ-likeness. The truth is that nobody has a choice about growing older, but we do have a choice about becoming more mature, flexible, kind, loving, understanding, and patient. There was actually a story on national news about a man who broke up with his girlfriend, a well know weather-woman for a TV station, because the man wanted to spend more time playing video games. While he was a professional gamer, there are so many men today who seem to put a greater priority on video games than they do on their families. I know that that was one of the first issues I had when I got married. My wife wanted to know that she was more important to me than the TV. Ouch! Yes, there were sparks...but she had a valid point. Over time I have learned that your spouse, kids, and friends want to know that they matter to you. Are those close to you more important than your possessions, your hobbies, or just having things go your way? Do they believe that to be true?

I just came back from my summer vacation in Colorado. This is a special time with family and close friends. One thing I discovered years ago is that family vacation is not just a break from the stress of your normal work responsibilities; it is an opportunity for you and your family to grow closer together. You can’t get much closer than spending countless hours together in a car and playing sardines in a hotel room. One such vacation my

wife told me that I was going to have to bend my rule about not eating in my car if we were going to travel in it for vacation. Even though it was a brand new car, I agreed. Within an hour of leaving home my wife said that she was ready to eat. I figured she brought a carefully wrapped sandwich. Wrong again. She got out a bowl, a knife, and a bag of lettuce. She poured the lettuce into the bowl and then began to cut up carrots, celery, squash, and a hardboiled egg. I could not hold back the spark. “I didn’t know you were going to cook.” That was a dumb thing to say. “Cooking requires heat.” The heat I was providing was not helping. I had to hold it back. The salad was quickly completed. Now all she needed to do was to add the salad dressing. With two or three quick shakes of the bottle we both discovered that the top of the Italian Dressing was not on the bottle securely. Dressing went everywhere. This was a special opportunity that does not come up on a regular basis, PTL. This was a chance to let my wife know how much more important she was to me than my new car. While my response was not perfect, the experience did help me loosen up for all the other food incidences that we were yet to experience. I eventually sold that car. I still have my family. I have to admit it, my wife was right when she said, “One day this will be funny.”

Jesus probably never had an “Italian Dressing” incident. But every time a surprising circumstance presented itself, Jesus seemed to make it into a memorable opportunity to share His love and compassion. The older I get, the more I realize the importance of sharing that same love, compassion, and kindness. These character qualities are fruit of the Spirit that grow and last. There is some wisdom in learning to use temporal thing, the things that do not last, to enhance the things that are eternal. Those around me are made for eternity. I hope they know that they are more important to me than anything on the TV.

in Christ,

PASTOR CARLOS ✕