

## **“BE HUMAN ENOUGH TO ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR NEED!”**

by Rom A. Pegram (11/6/16)

Many of you are parents & grandparents, so I know you're going to relate to what I'm about to say. When my daughter, Rachel, turned 18 years old and went to college that fall, one of the things she was looking forward to the most was her independence as an adult. We live in a country that talks about independence often, and we have a day where we celebrate the independence of our nation—which is great, but sometimes that celebration of independence as a nation rolls over into our thinking as individuals in unhealthy ways. But, Rachel loved the idea of independence she'd heard so much about ... and couldn't wait to experience that independence in her life. I believe it's one reason *she* chose a school that was about 4 states away to attend. She desired, with all her heart, to experience the independence she'd dreamed about for years!

Then, when she was away at school—sometime during her first semester at Asbury College in Wilmore, Kentucky, she became a bit discouraged by the whole idea of independence. She wanted, in the worst way, to be *totally autonomous*! But, the realities of life set in and Rachel soon realized she still had needs that only those around her—those whom she loved and she knew loved her—could meet...

- She found out that this life of independence cost a little more than she expected, so she had to turn to mom and dad for some help once in a while...
- She found out she was running into situations where she had to make decisions she'd never had to make before, and she had to turn to either mom or dad to talk about those decisions from time to time...
- She found herself in a situation where if she wanted a certain job while away at school, she would have to ask her brother for help ... and the use of his car once in a while...

Rachel discovered that once she left home everything did not always turn up rosy! She had some difficult days—some bad days ... and one way she learned to get through those difficult days was to 'be human enough to acknowledge her need' and then ask for help from those around her ... including God. Autonomy wasn't all it was cracked up to be. And, here's a good question for you: *Is total autonomy really a part of the Christian life, as God designed it?*

Jesus gives us some insights into our bad days, as we hear his words from the cross today—the 5<sup>th</sup> last word of Jesus to be exact. And it comes to us from the Gospel of John, Chapter 19, and Verse 28. Listen carefully now to Jesus' word for today (John 19:28, TEV)...

**“Jesus knew that by now everything had been completed; and in order to make the scripture come true, he said, ‘I am thirsty’.”**

This is Jesus best buddy John who recorded our scripture for today—the one who was there. John, like Jesus, had been taught the scriptures since he was a boy. He knew the

prophecies of God. And he saw prophecy, this day, being fulfilled through Jesus actions on the cross. That's why he records the event in this way. John said, "... in order to make scripture come true, he said..." because *John knew it was God who was in control of this day* and all that was happening, including Jesus' last words...

But, here is Jesus, the Son of God, One who could call down an army of angels anytime he wanted to ... crying out and saying "I am thirsty." Folks, Jesus was indeed divine, but on this day Jesus voluntarily gave up his 'divine status' in order to accomplish God's will for his life—dying on the cross for you and me! So, as one who had temporarily given up his 'divine status'—now operating as 'fully human', Jesus gives us a great insight into how to get through our bad days. What did he do? *Jesus became human enough to acknowledge his need, didn't he?* Folks, here's something Jesus realized on this very bad day ... and you and I need to realize too when ours come along...

**JESUS HAD A NEED HE COULD NOT FULFILL ON HIS OWN!** Why? Because he'd voluntarily let go of his 'divine status' for you and me! *He was thirsty!* He'd refused a drink earlier in this crucifixion, but—no matter how bad the drink was they were offering—he was ready to accept that drink; he was *that* thirsty! Jesus found out—in his humanness—that *total autonomy was not what it was cracked up to be!*

In order to get through this bad day, *Jesus had to become human enough to acknowledge his need ... and then ask for help...* Jesus had to let any human pride that he possessed go; he had to say 'good bye' to any prideful thoughts that might stand in the way of his fulfilling God's will! *Pride has no place in the life of a believer—one who is a part of the Body of Christ!*

Folks, there's a message in his words, here, for us too! We need to let pride go in our lives and be human enough, during our bad days, to acknowledge our need and to reach out to the Body, the Church! But, admitting that we are human—not as good as God—is half the battle sometimes. The Apostle Paul tries to help us out with that in his 2<sup>nd</sup> letter to the Corinthians (4:7ff). In *The Message*, Paul's words read this way:

If you only look at *us*, you might well miss the brightness (speaking of God). We carry this precious Message around in the unadorned clay pots of our ordinary lives. That's to prevent anyone from confusing God's incomparable power with us. As it is, there's not much chance of that. You know for yourselves that we're not much to look at. We've been surrounded and battered by troubles, but we're not demoralized; we're not sure what to do, but we know that God knows what to do; we've been spiritually terrorized, but God hasn't left our side; we've been thrown down, but we haven't broken. What they did to Jesus, they do to us—trial and torture, mockery and murder; what Jesus did among them, he does in us—he lives! Our lives are at constant risk for Jesus' sake, which makes Jesus' life all the more evident in us. While we're going through the worst, you're getting in on the best!

Do you see what Paul is saying here? Not just because we are human, but because we follow Christ, bad days will come our way. And the first step to getting through those

bad days is to realize that *God is God, and we are not* (as the Steven Curtis Chapman song says)!

We are human ... with human needs ... and, as Paul also says in Galatians 6:2, “Help carry one another’s burdens, and in this way you will obey the law of Christ.” In other words, be human enough to acknowledge your need ... and then turn to others—and to God—for help! Be obedient as God leads you in that! God may have someone specific who He wants to help you at some point ... not only for *your* sake, but also for *their* sake! ... So, Jesus had a need that he could not—at this point—fulfill on his own ... and he also did this for us...

**JESUS GAVE US AN EXAMPLE OF HOW TO GET THROUGH OUR BAD DAYS BY REACHING OUT TO OTHERS IN OUR TIME OF NEED.** That’s what our prayer time is all about on Sunday mornings! By having a prayer time, like we do, during our Sunday morning worship times, we’re following Jesus’ example from the cross. It’s a time to be human enough to acknowledge our need ... sometimes publicly, as God leads! With Jesus as our example, we need to know how much God loves us and reach out to others in our time of need *with confidence*! That’s what our prayer times need to be ... for one another...

Rachel and I finally resolved her disappointment in not being as independent as she wanted to be during a conversation one day. In great frustration, she finally came to the conclusion that *she needed other people*—total autonomy was not only ridiculous, it was also probably not possible ... and shouldn’t be, if we’re followers of Christ...

At the end of our conversation, I gave these words to Rachel as a gift: “Rachel, you’ve been my daughter for 18 years ... and, the fact is, you’ll be my daughter for the rest of this life. With that status, you have my permission to ask your mother and I for help any time you need it. That’s your right. That’s your privilege. We cannot always do as much as we’d like to, but we will do for you what we can ... because we love you.”

I closed this conversation with Rachel by saying: “And, Rachel, until you have children of your own, you’ll never realize what joy it brings to your mother and I to be able to give to you when we can. So, don’t you ever, EVER, steal that joy from your mother and I. Let us be your parents—those who love you the most.” And now, with children of her own, Rachel’s beginning to understand what we meant...

You know, I think that’s a conversation God wants to have with us at times ... especially during our ‘bad days.’ God wants to tell us...

- “You’ve been my child since the day you were born ... and, in reality, you’ll be my child for the rest of your life. Because of that, you have the right and the privilege to turn to me ... and to my people.”
- And, I believe God also wants to tell us: “What joy it gives me to be able to give to you. Don’t you ever, EVER, steal that joy from me again! I AM ... the one who loves you the most!”

Folks, it's time in our lives to let the pride go. It gets in the way of the awesome, loving relationship God wants to have *with* us. *Total autonomy* was never a part of God's design. Rachel has learned that. Jesus taught us that ... by his words on the cross. Now, what are YOU going to do with THAT truth?