

Don't Rush Past Living

By: David Burruss

This Sunday is Mother's Day, and for the first time in my life, I will walk into it without my mother here. I have stood at gravesides and preached through tears, offering words of comfort to families who were just beginning to understand the weight of their loss. I have told them about what I call the year of firsts. The first Mother's Day without her. The first birthday that comes and goes in silence. The first Thanksgiving where her chair sits empty at the table. I have told those families that it will not always be easy, and that is the truth. But I have also told them to remember and cherish every wonderful memory, and to seek the Lord in prayer because He is the God of all comfort, the One who draws near to the brokenhearted. I believed every word I ever said at those funerals. I just never expected to need them quite so soon myself.

So here I am, on the other side of those words now, and I find them to be just as true as the day I first spoke them. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God," in 2 Corinthians 1:3-4. There is something profound in that, something I understand a little more deeply this week than I ever have before. Grief has a way of deepening your ministry if you let it, and I want to let it.

But as I have been sitting with all of this, something else has been pressing on my heart just as heavily, and it is this: so many of us spend our days waiting. We wait for five o'clock to arrive. We wait for Friday like it is a promised land. We wait for the next season of life, the next chapter, the next thing, and somewhere in all of that waiting, we miss the very life that is happening in between. We are so focused on what is coming that we let what is here pass right by us without ever really holding it.

James writes in chapter 4, verse 14, "whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away." A vapor. That is not a comforting image so much as it is an honest one, and I think we need the honesty. Life is not a long, slow river that will wait for us to get ready. It is a breath, a mist that rises in the morning and is gone before noon. We do not get to pause it and come back when it is more convenient. We only get now, and now is already moving.

I think about all the evenings I could have called my mother just to hear her voice, all the ordinary Tuesday afternoons that slipped by without a second thought. I was not a perfect son, and ours was not a perfect relationship. We had our struggles, and there were seasons where the distance between us was more than just miles. But underneath all of it, through every difficulty and every moment of tension, we both knew the truth. She knew I loved her, and I knew she loved me, and that is something I will carry with me for the rest of my life. Even so, I still lived like most of us live, always assuming there would be more time, always believing the meaningful conversation could wait until the weekend, the visit could happen next month, the words could be said later. And then later runs out. It always does, because life is a vapor.

So please hear me when I say this, not as a preacher standing behind a pulpit, but as a son who is walking into his first Mother's Day without his mother. Do not rush past the days you are living. Slow down and look at the people sitting across the table from you. Call the person you have been meaning to call. Say the thing you have been meaning to say. Forgive the offense that has been sitting between you and someone you love, because unforgiveness is just another way of wasting the vapor. Jesus did not stutter when He said in Matthew 6:14 that if we forgive others their trespasses, our heavenly Father will also forgive us. Forgiveness is not a suggestion. It is the way we keep our hearts free enough to actually live and to actually love.

Love harder than you think you need to. Cherish the moments that feel ordinary right now because one day you will understand that they were never ordinary at all. They were everything. The Sunday morning drive to worship, the dinner table with everyone still home, the phone call that lasted twenty minutes longer than you planned, the laugh you shared over something that nobody else would have found funny, those are the things that remain when everything else is gone. Those are the things you carry with you into your year of firsts.

And when the grief comes, because it will come for all of us in one form or another, go to your Father. Not as a last resort but as a first response. Philippians 4:6-7 reminds us, "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." That peace is real. I am leaning on it this weekend, and I am telling you it holds.

Happy Mother's Day to every mother reading this, and to every person carrying a quiet ache this Sunday because their mother is no longer here. We grieve together, and we hope together, because the God who holds our mothers also holds us, and He is not finished yet.