

Psalm 107:28-37

June 24, '18

“SHIPWRESCKUED”

ON VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL SUNDAY, WE ALWAYS TALK ABOUT A MOVIE THAT HAS SOMETHING TO DO WITH OUR BIBLE SCHOOL THEME.

TODAY, I WANT TO TELL YOU ABOUT A MOVIE THAT’S OLD - I MEAN – LIKE REALLY OLD.

THIS ONE IS SO OLD THAT IT WAS OLD WHEN YOU’RE PARENTS WERE YOUR AGE.

IT’S SO OLD THAT YOUR GRANDPARENTS WERE PROBABLY CHILDREN WHEN IT FIRST CAME OUT.

IT’S A MOVIE CALLED “SWISS FAMILY ROBINSON” AND THE REASON I WANTED TO USE IT TODAY IS BECAUSE IT’S EXACTLY WHAT OUR VBS THEME WAS.

IT’S ABOUT BEING SHIPWRECKED.

NOW, THE TITLE I’VE USED IS JUST ONE WORD – BUT IT’S NOT EVEN A REAL WORD.

I’VE CALLED IT “SHIPWRESCKUED” WHICH IS A COMBINATION OF TWO WORDS – SHIPWRECKED & RESCUED BECAUSE WE PRETENDED WE WERE SHIPWRECKED IN VBS & WE LEARNED HOW MANY DIFFERENT WAYS GOD RESCUES US.

I WANT TO TELL YOU WHAT HAPPENS IN THE MOVIE BUT I ALSO WANT TO TELL YOU A FEW MORE THINGS AS WELL.

THE MOVIE WAS FIRST A BOOK & IF YOU THINK THE MOVIE IS OLD - WELL, THE BOOK IS MORE THAN 200 YEARS OLD!

IT WAS WRITTEN BY A MAN NAMED JOHANN WYSS.

HE WAS A PASTOR IN SWITZERLAND & HE HAD TWO SONS & AT NIGHT HE WOULD TELL THEM STORIES.

AND THESE STORIES WERE ALWAYS ABOUT A FAMILY THAT HAD BEEN SHIPWRECKED ON AN ISLAND.

SOUNDS LIKE VBS ALREADY, DOESN'T IT?

THIS FAMILY WAS CALLED "ROBINSON" AFTER ROBINSON CRUSOE WHO WAS PROBABLY THE MOST FAMOUS MAN EVER TO BE SHIPWRECKED ON AN ISLAND – UNTIL TOM HANKS & HIS VOLLEYBALL, WILSON.

OKAY – LET'S FORGET ABOUT THE BOOK NOW & LET ME TELL YOU ABOUT THE MOVIE BECAUSE IT'S REALLY A LOT OF FUN & VERY EXCITING!

IT BEGINS IN A TERRIBLE STORM WITH A BOAT IN THE MIDDLE OF THE SEA, ROCKING BACK & FORTH.

IT CRASHES INTO SOME HUGE ROCKS & WE DON'T KNOW ANYONE ABOARD EXCEPT FOR A FAMILY OF FIVE – A MOM & DAD AND THREE SONS – FRITZ, ERNST & FRANCIS.

WE FIND OUT LATER THAT THE BOAT WAS TRYING TO GET AWAY FROM PIRATES & THE ROBINSON FAMILY WAS ON THE BOAT BECAUSE THEY WERE TRYING TO GET AWAY FROM A WAR AT HOME TO GET TO NEW GUINEA TO SET UP A BRAND NEW COLONY OF PEOPLE.

THE BOAT HAS CRASHED PRETTY CLOSE TO LAND BUT FAR ENOUGH OUT THAT THEY CAN'T SWIM TO IT.

THEY FIND ALL KINDS OF SUPPLIES & EVEN A LOT OF ANIMALS ON BOARD.

THEY MAKE A BIG CANOE OUT OF SOME BARRELS AND ALL FIVE MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY CLIMB INSIDE.

THE LITTLEST BOY, FRANCIS, FOUND 2 BIG DOGS WHO SWIM ALONGSIDE THE CANOE & THEY EVENTUALLY PULL THEM ABOARD WITH THEM.

WHEN THEY GET TO LAND, DAD SAYS, “WELL, THE FIRST THING WE SHOULD DO IS FIND SHELTER.”

BUT MOM SAYS, “NO, THE FIRST THING WE’RE GOING TO DO IS PRAY.”

AND THEY ALL GATHER ON THE SHORE, GET DOWN ON THEIR KNEES AND GIVE THANKS THAT, EVEN IN THEIR TIME OF BEING ALL ALONE, THEY KNOW GOD IS WITH THEM & HAS RESCUED THEM.

AND THAT WAS ONE OF OUR LESSONS IN BIBLE SCHOOL THIS WEEK, WASN’T IT?

WHENEVER WE’RE LONELY & FEEL AS THOUGH WE’RE ALL ALONE, WE KNOW THAT WE NEVER ARE.

WHEN WE’RE LONELY, JESUS RESCUES US.

GOD IS ALWAYS WITH US, WATCHING OVER US & PROTECTING US.

THAT’S WHAT THE ROBINSONS WERE FEELING – LONELY BUT KNOWING THAT, WITH GOD, THEY WEREN’T REALLY ALONE.

WELL, BACK TO THE STORY.

THEY SET UP SHELTER ON THE BEACH & DAD AND THE TWO OLDER BOYS – FRITZ & ERNST – TAKE THE CANOE BACK TO THE CRASHED SHIP TO GET MORE SUPPLIES.

THEY GET EVERYTHING THEY COULD POSSIBLE NEED BECAUSE, REMEMBER, THE BOAT WAS LOADED WITH ALL THE SUPPLIES THAT WOULD BE NEEDED FOR SETTING UP A BRAND NEW COLONY SOMEWHERE ELSE.

THEY EVEN MAKE BIG LIFE PRESERVERS FOR ALL THE ANIMALS TO BE ABLE TO SWIM TO SHORE.

(BY THE WAY, IT TOOK THEM 2 WEEKS TO FILM THIS SCENE OF THE ANIMALS IN THE WATER – A SCENE THAT DOESN'T TAKE UP MORE THAN 2 MINUTES OF THE MOVIE!)

WELL, BACK ON SHORE, MOM AND THE LITTLEST BOY, FRANCIS, ARE DOING SOME WORK ON THEIR NEW SHELTER, BUT MOM LOOKS AROUND & FRANCIS IS GONE.

HE'S NOWHERE TO BE SEEN.

SHE CALLS FOR HIM BUT HE DOESN'T ANSWER.

SHE STARTS WALKING INTO THE JUNGLE (OR FOREST) AND THEN WE SEE FRANCIS.

HE'S TRYING TO CATCH AN ELEPHANT!

THAT'S RIGHT – HE SEES A BABY ELEPHANT AND HE'S RIGGED UP A TRAP SO THAT WHEN THE ELEPHANT STEPS INTO A ROPE, FRANCIS WILL PULL ON IT & HAVE HIM ON A LEASH.

BUT THERE'S A PROBLEM.

A HUGE TIGER IS LURKING IN THE BUSHES & JUST AS THE ELEPHANT STEPS INTO THE TRAP, THE TIGER ATTACKS THE ELEPHANT.

FRANCIS STARTS YELLING AT THE TIGER AND THROWING ROCKS AT HIM & JUST THEN THEN – MOM, WITH THE TWO DOGS COME RUSHING IN.

THE DOGS GO RACING AFTER THE TIGER AND THERE'S A HUGE FIGHT & THE DOGS SCARE HIM OFF.

MOM, OF COURSE, IS NOT PLEASED WITH FRANCIS.

HE HAD WANDERED OFF & WALKED INTO A VERY DANGEROUS SITUATION & COULD HAVE BEEN BADLY HURT.

HE WAS WRONG & HE KNEW IT.

**EVEN THOUGH HE WAS WRONG & HAD DONE SOMETHING BAD,
HE WAS RESCUED.**

**AND THAT SOUNDS LIKE ANOTHER ONE OF OUR BIBLE SCHOOL
LESSONS, DOESN'T IT?**

WHEN WE DO WRONG, WHEN WE SIN, JESUS WILL RESCUE US.

**WE ALL DO BAD THINGS, WRONG THINGS, THINGS WE KNOW WE
SHOULDN'T DO.**

WHEN WE ASK FOR FORGIVENESS, JESUS RESCUES US.

WELL, BACK TO THE MOVIE AGAIN.

**DAD & FRITZ & ERNST MAKE IT BACK TO SHORE & THEY SET
OUT TO BUILD A MUCH BETTER SHELTER THAN THE ONE THEY HAD
ON THE BEACH.**

THEY BUILD A TREEHOUSE – BUT NOT JUST ANY TREEHOUSE.

**THEY BUILD THE GREATEST TREEHOUSE ANYONE HAS EVER
SEEN.**

**THIS IS A TREEHOUSE THAT HAS THREE SEPARATE FLOORS TO
IT.**

**IT HAS A KITCHEN WITH RUNNING WATER, A COOLER (LIKE A
REFRIGERATOR), A BEDROOM FOR THE BOYS & A HUGE MASTER
BEDROOM FOR MOM & DAD.**

**IT SEEMS TO BE TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE, BUT WHEN THEY WERE
MAKING THE MOVIE, THEY ACTUALLY DID BUILD THIS TREEHOUSE &
EVERYTHING REALLY WORKED (WALT DISNEY INSISTED ON THAT
PART)!**

**AFTER A WHILE – WHEN THEY KNOW THEY'LL BE STUCK ON
THE ISLAND FOREVER UNLESS THEY FIND HELP, THE TWO OLDER
BOYS – FRITZ & ERNST – SUGGEST THEY TAKE THE CANOE AND GO**

LOOKING FOR ANOTHER VILLAGE OR OUTPOST ON THE ISLAND WHERE SHIPS COME IN.

WHILE THEY'RE OUT ON THE WATER ON THEIR CANOE, A STORM COMES UP & THE BOAT STARTS ROCKING BACK AND FORTH & HUGE WAVES COME CRASHING INTO IT & THE BOAT CAPSIZES – THAT MEANS IT TIPS COMPLETELY OVER – AND FRITZ & ERNST ARE THROWN INTO THE WATER.

THEY TRY TO SWIM & THEY'RE FLAILING THEIR ARMS ALL AROUND & THEY'RE STRUGGLING JUST TO KEEP THEIR HEADS ABOVE WATER, HOPING THAT SOMEHOW THEY'LL BE RESCUED.

HEY – THERE'S ANOTHER ONE OF OUR BIBLE SCHOOL THEMES – WHEN WE STRUGGLE, JESUS RESCUES US.

LIKE FRITZ & ERNST, SOMETIMES IT SEEMS LIKE WE'RE IN THE MIDDLE OF A TERRIBLE STORM IN OUR LIVES.

WE MIGHT FEEL AS IF WE'VE BEEN THROWN OVERBOARD.

IT MIGHT FEEL LIKE WE'RE DROWNING WITH ALL THE PROBLEMS WE HAVE TO FACE.

WE STRUGGLE WITH THINGS THAT ARE HARD FOR US.

WE HOPE – AND EVEN MORE – WE PRAY THAT GOD WILL RESCUE US.

AND WE KNOW THAT HE WILL.

WE KNOW THAT IN ALL OF OUR STRUGGLES – IN EVERY HARD THING WE FACE – JESUS WILL RESCUE US.

OKAY, BACK TO THE MOVIE.

FRITZ & ERNST MAKE IT TO LAND & THEY SEE THE PIRATES THAT HAD FIRST BEEN CHASING THEM WHEN THEY WERE ON THE BOAT AT THE BEGINNING OF THE MOVIE.

AND THEY ALSO SEE A SHIP'S CAPTAIN & A YOUNG BOY TIED TO POLES & SITTING ON THE BEACH, AWAY FROM THE PIRATES.

THE BOYS HELP FREE THE BOY BUT THE PIRATES SEE THEM & START RUNNING AFTER THEM.

THE CAPTAIN TELLS THEM TO RUN AWAY AND IF HE GETS FREE HIMSELF, HE'LL COME BACK WITH A SHIP TO RESCUE THEM.

FRITZ, ERNST & THE BOY GO RUNNING INTO THE JUNGLE & ESCAPE THE PIRATES.

AFTER A WHILE, THEY LEARN THAT THE BOY ISN'T REALLY A BOY.

IT'S A GIRL NAMED ROBERTA & FRITZ & ERNST BOTH THINK SHE'S KIND OF CUTE.

THE THREE OF THEM WANDER AROUND THE ISLAND, TRYING TO FIND THEIR WAY BACK TO THEIR FAMILY BUT THEY'RE LOST.

THEY DON'T KNOW WHICH WAY TO GO.

THEY END UP IN A SWAMP & THEY'RE ATTACKED BY A HUGE SNAKE CALLED AN ANACONDA.

IT WRAPS ITSELF AROUND FRITZ & HE'S POWERLESS TO BEAT IT.

ERNST & ROBERTA TRY TO HELP BUT THEY SEEM TO BE POWERLESS TO DO ANYTHING EITHER.

THEY FINALLY ARE ABLE TO GET AWAY FROM THE SNAKE BUT THEY HAVE NO IDEA WHERE THEY ARE AND NO IDEA WHAT TO DO.

THEY FEEL COMPLETELY POWERLESS, BUT FRITZ SAYS, "WE'VE JUST GOT TO KEEP GOING."

THEY HOPE & PRAY THAT – EVEN THOUGH THEY'RE LOST & EVEN THOUGH THEY'RE POWERLESS TO DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT – THEY HOPE & PRAY THAT THEY WILL BE RESCUED.

**AND AGAIN, THAT'S ONE OF OUR LESSONS FROM BIBLE SCHOOL.
A LOT OF TIMES IN LIFE, WE FEEL LIKE WE'RE POWERLESS.
WE FEEL LOST AND AFRAID AND WE FEEL WE CAN'T DO
ANYTHING TO SAVE OURSELVES.**

**WE KNOW, THOUGH, THAT IN THOSE TIMES – THOSE TIMES IN
LIFE WHEN WE ARE POWERLESS – JESUS RESCUES US.**

WE MAY BE POWERLESS OURSELVES, BUT JESUS ISN'T.

HE WILL ALWAYS BE THERE TO RESCUE US.

OKAY – BACK TO THE MOVIE.

**FINALLY – FRITZ, ERNST & ROBERTA FIND THEIR WAY BACK TO
THE TREEHOUSE & BACK TO THE FAMILY.**

**THEY ARRIVE ON CHRISTMAS NIGHT & THEY HEAR THEIR MOM
& DAD & FRANCIS SINGING CHRISTMAS SONGS.**

**AFTER BEING RE-UNITED WITH THEIR FAMILY & INTRODUCING
THEM TO ROBERTA, THERE ARE ALL SORTS OF OTHER FUN THINGS
THAT HAPPEN.**

**BUT THEY KNOW THAT THE PIRATES ARE GOING TO COME
LOOKING FOR THEM & THEY PREPARE FOR IT BY MOVING TO THE
TOP OF A HIGH HILL & SETTING UP THEIR DEFENSES.**

THEY HAVE COCONUT BOMBS & ALL SORTS OF BOOBY-TRAPS.

**THEY HAVE AN ENORMOUS LOG PILE THAT WILL BECOME AN
AVALANCHE & THEY HAVE PITS ALL AROUND THE BOTTOM OF THE
HILL & EVEN ONE THAT HAS A TIGER IN IT.**

WHEN THE PIRATES SHOW UP, THOUGH, THEY'RE WORRIED.

**FATHER SAYS, “THERE ARE MORE THAN 10 OF THEM FOR EVERY
ONE OF US.”**

THEY KNOW THERE'S NOT MUCH THEY CAN DO TO BEAT SO MANY PIRATES & THEY'RE VERY WORRIED THAT THEY WON'T POSSIBLY BE RESCUED.

AND THERE'S ONE MORE BIBLE SCHOOL THEME.

WHEN YOU'RE WORRIED, JESUS RESCUES YOU.

THE FAMILY WAS AS WORRIED AS THEY COULD POSSIBLY BE.

THEY DIDN'T SEE ANY WAY OUT OF THEIR TROUBLES.

BUT, IN THE END, JESUS RESCUED THEM.

SOMETIMES, YOU MIGHT FEEL LIKE THAT YOURSELF.

YOU MIGHT BE WORRIED THAT YOUR TROUBLES ARE SO BIG THAT YOU'LL NEVER GET OVER THEM.

WE NEED TO REMEMBER THAT WHEN WE FEEL THAT WAY – WHEN WE'RE WORRIED ABOUT A REALLY BIG PROBLEM, JESUS WILL ALWAYS COME TO THE RESCUE FOR US.

WELL, IN THE END, THE SWISS FAMILY ROBINSON WAS RESCUED FROM THE PIRATES.

THEY WERE JUST ABOUT TO LOSE THE BATTLE WITH ALL OF THOSE PIRATES AND SUDDENLY, THE PIRATES STARTED RUNNING AWAY.

THEY LOOKED OUT INTO THE SEA & SAW A BIG SHIP COMING ASHORE.

ROBERTA SAID, "THAT'S ONE OF MY FATHER'S SHIPS! HE'S COME TO RESCUE US!"

AND THAT'S TRUE FOR US AS WELL.

OUR *HEAVENLY* FATHER WILL ALWAYS SHOW UP IN OUR SCARIEST MOMENTS TO RESCUE US.

WELL, YOU'D THINK EVERYONE WOULD BE VERY EXCITED TO GET ON BOARD THAT SHIP & GET OFF THE ISLAND WHERE THEY HAD BEEN SHIPWRECKED.

BUT GUESS WHAT?

THE ONLY ONE WHO DECIDED TO LEAVE WAS ERNST BECAUSE HE WANTED TO GO TO COLLEGE & ROBERTA'S FATHER SAID HE'D HELP HIM GET MORE OF AN EDUCATION.

EVEN THOUGH HE WAS LEAVING THE ISLAND, HE PROMISED TO COME BACK AT THE END OF THE SCHOOL YEAR.

MOM & DAD & FRANCIS & FRITZ AND EVEN ROBERTA DECIDED THEY'D FOUND THEIR TRUE HOME & WERE GOING TO STAY ON THE ISLAND THAT THEY HAD NAMED "NEW SWITZERLAND."

AND THERE THEY LIVED, "HAPPILY EVER AFTER."

*The Reverend Dr. Dennis R. Davenport
Eastminster Presbyterian Church
Evansville, Indiana*

**June 24, '18
VBS**

**VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL
ADULT SERMON**

ON VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL SUNDAY, IT IS OUR CUSTOM TO EITHER REVERSE THE ORDER OF THE SERMON & THE CHILDREN'S SERMON OR AT LEAST REVERSE THE *LENGTH* OF THEM.

IN OTHER WORDS, THE CHILDREN'S SERMON ON VBS SUNDAYS IS THE LONGER OF THE TWO.

THE POINT OF THE ADULT SERMON ON THIS SUNDAY IS VIRTUALLY THE SAME EVERY SINGLE YEAR – IT'S AN EMPHASIS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF CHILDREN – THEIR IMPORTANCE IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH & THEIR IMPORTANCE IN OUR OWN LIVES.

THIS YEAR IS NO DIFFERENT & YET – IN SOME WAYS, IT IS.

CONSIDERING THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF RECENT WEEKS & MONTHS, CAN YOU IMAGINE A BETTER SUNDAY THAN THIS ONE TO BE FOCUSING ON THE IMPORTANCE OF CHILDREN – THE IMPORTANCE OF CHILDREN IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH, THE IMPORTANCE OF CHILDREN IN OUR OWN LIVES AND, IN FACT, THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CHILDREN OF THE WORLD?

I NEVER CEASE TO BE AMAZED – AND I REALLY SHOULDN'T BE – AT HOW PROVIDENTIALLY SOME THINGS SEEM TO ALIGN ON A CONSISTENT BASIS IN OUR WORSHIP EXPERIENCE.

A GOOD EXAMPLE IS OUR BULLETIN COVER THIS MORNING.

IT DEPICTS THE STORY THAT IS FOUND IN TODAY'S LECTIONARY GOSPEL READING.

WHAT BETTER COVER FOR A SUNDAY WHEN OUR BIBLE SCHOOL FOCUSED ON A “SHIPWRECKED” THEME THAN A BOAT IN THE MIDDLE OF A STORM.

AND THEN THERE’S THIS FOR A CLEARLY PROVIDENTIAL ALIGNMENT:

CAN YOU IMAGINE WHAT IT WOULD BE LIKE TO HAVE TO FLEE YOUR COUNTRY WITH YOUR CHILDREN IN SEARCH OF A BETTER HOME & A BETTER LIFE?

AND CAN YOU IMAGINE WHAT IT WOULD BE LIKE TO DISCOVER THAT AS YOU CAME NEAR THAT OTHER LAND IT MIGHT BE JUST AS DIFFICULT FOR YOU AS THE LAND YOU WERE FLEEING – THAT THE DREAM OF A BETTER HOMELAND WAS GOING TO BE SHATTERED BECAUSE OF CIRCUMSTANCES YOU HADN’T FORESEEN?

AND CAN YOU IMAGINE HOW FRIGHTENING IT WOULD BE TO BE SEPARATED FROM YOUR CHILDREN & HAVE NO IDEA WHAT HAPPENED TO THEM?

THAT’S EXACTLY WHAT “SWISS FAMILY ROBINSON” IS ABOUT, THOUGH IT MAY HAVE MADE YOU THINK OF A MORE CONTEMPORARY APPLICATION.

YES - THERE IS, SO OFTEN, A PROVIDENTIAL ALIGNMENT OF THINGS WE EXPERIENCE IN WORSHIP.

SUCH AN ALIGNMENT MAKES ME THINK OF MY GRANDFATHER.

MY PATERNAL GRANDFATHER DIED WHEN I WAS ELEVEN YEARS OLD SO I DIDN’T GET A CHANCE TO KNOW HIM VERY WELL.

I REMEMBER, THOUGH, THAT SHORTLY AFTER HIS DEATH, I WAS GIVEN AN ASSIGNMENT IN SCHOOL TO WRITE AN ESSAY ABOUT SOMEONE I ADMIRE.

I WROTE ABOUT GRANDPA DAVENPORT.

**I WROTE ABOUT THE LAST TIME I SAW HIM.
HE WAS IN A V.A. HOSPITAL IN DEARBORN, MICHIGAN.
I REMEMBER HE WAS LYING IN BED IN VERY POOR HEALTH.
I REMEMBER THAT HE COULDN'T STAND UP & HE COULDN'T
HUG ME.**

**BUT I ALSO REMEMBER THAT INSTEAD, HE REACHED OUT HIS
HAND FOR ME TO SHAKE IT.**

**AS WEAK & FEEBLE AS HE SEEMED TO BE, HIS GRIP FELT AS
THOUGH IT WAS GOING TO BREAK MY HAND.**

**I TITLED MY ESSAY "TO BE RESPECTED" – BECAUSE THAT
MOMENT WAS A MOMENT THAT, TO ME, ENCAPSULATED THIS MAN'S
LIFE.**

**HE WAS A MAN WHO LIVED HONORABLY & TO THE VERY END, I
SAW HIS STRENGTH & I KNEW HE WAS A MAN "TO BE RESPECTED."**

**ONE OF MY MOST VIVID CHILDHOOD MEMORIES IS A TIME A
FEW YEARS BEFORE, WHEN I WAS VISITING MY GRANDPA
DAVENPORT IN LEWISTON, MICHIGAN, MORE THAN 200 MILES NORTH
OF OUR HOME NEAR DETROIT.**

**HE LIVED IN A LOG CABIN JUST A FEW BLOCKS FROM THE TINY
"DOWNTOWN" AREA OF LEWISTON.**

**I WAS ABOUT 8 OR 9 YEARS OLD & I'D WALKED TO A LITTLE FIVE
& DIME STORE FOR CANDY & BASEBALL CARDS.**

**WHILE I WAS WALKING OUT, TWO OLDER BOYS APPROACHED
ME & TOLD ME THEY WERE GOING TO TAKE EVERYTHING I'D JUST
BOUGHT.**

**THEY HELD ONTO ME – ONE ON EITHER SIDE & WALKED ME
AWAY FROM THE STORE TOWARD AN ALLEY.**

THEY WERE MOMENTARILY DISTRACTED BY SOMETHING & LET GO OF MY ARMS.

IMMEDIATELY AS THEY DID, I STARTED RUNNING – AS FAST AS I COULD TOWARD MY GRANDFATHER’S HOUSE.

I DIDN’T LOOK BACK BUT I KNEW THEY WERE BEHIND ME.

I RAN PAST ONE BLOCK & THEN ANOTHER.

I TURNED A CORNER WHERE I COULD SEE GRANDPA’S HOUSE.

I KNEW IF I COULD MAKE IT THERE I’D BE SAFE.

I KNEW MY GRANDPA WAS THERE & HE’D NEVER LET ANYTHING BAD HAPPEN TO ONE OF HIS GRANDCHILDREN.

AS I GOT CLOSER TO THE HOUSE, I SAW GRANDPA OUTSIDE & I NO LONGER HEARD THE FOOTSTEPS OF THOSE TWO OLDER BOYS.

I KNEW I WAS SAFE.

THERE’S A REASON FOR TELLING YOU ABOUT MY GRANDPA.

THERE WAS ONE THING ABOUT HIM THAT I HAD BEEN TOLD SINCE I WAS PROBABLY 4 YEARS OLD.

IT WAS SOMETHING I REPEATED EVERY TIME THE OPPORTUNITY AROSE.

WHEN SOMEONE WOULD ASK ME ABOUT HIM, I’D PROUDLY SAY, “*MY GRANDPA FOUNDED THE BORDER PATROL.*”

AS I BECAME A BIT OLDER, I ASSUMED THAT WAS ONE OF THOSE THINGS THAT KIDS ALWAYS SAID TO ONE ANOTHER ABOUT A PARENT OR GRANDPARENT – SOMETHING AKIN TO “*MY DAD CAN BEAT UP YOUR DAD.*”

RECENTLY, THOUGH, THROUGH EMMA SUE’S GENEALOGY WORK, I’VE DISCOVERED THERE WAS MORE TRUTH TO THAT STATEMENT THAN I COULD POSSIBLY HAVE IMAGINED.

SEVERAL MONTHS AGO, EMMA SUE WAS CONTACTED BY A SENIOR BORDER PATROL OFFICIAL IN WASHINGTON, D.C., ASKING HER FOR INFORMATION ABOUT MY GRANDFATHER BECAUSE THEY WERE PUTTING TOGETHER A HISTORY OF THE BORDER PATROL.

SHE HAS BEEN IN REGULAR COMMUNICATION WITH THAT OFFICIAL SINCE THEN.

A PRESENTATION & PERMANENT DISPLAY WERE BEING CREATED & THEY NEEDED MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE FIRST SUPERVISOR OF THE UNITED STATES BORDER PATROL – MY GRANDFATHER - AND THE VITAL ROLE HE PLAYED IN ITS ESTABLISHMENT.

HIS OFFICE WAS IN WASHINGTON, D.C. & HIS PICTURE IS ONE OF VERY FEW THAT HAS BEEN GIVEN WALL SPACE IN THEIR NEWLY-CREATED DISPLAY.

THIS PAST WEEK, I COULDN'T HELP BUT THINK OF THAT CHILDHOOD MEMORY OF RUNNING TO THE SAFETY OF MY GRANDFATHER, KNOWING THAT HE LOVED ME – AS HE LOVED ALL CHILDREN - AND KNOWING HE WOULD NEVER LET ANYTHING BAD HAPPEN TO ME.

I DON'T REALLY KNOW HOW HE WOULD FEEL ABOUT THE CURRENT SITUATION WE'RE FACING ON OUR BORDER.

THAT SMALL ANECDOTAL EVIDENCE, THOUGH, TELLS ME THAT MY GRANDFATHER, ONE OF THE ORIGINAL FOUNDERS OF THE UNITED STATES BORDER PATROL WOULD – LIKE I TRUST ALL OF US HERE – RECOGNIZE THERE'S A SERIOUS ISSUE THAT HAS TO BE ADDRESSED.

AND – BASED ON MY OWN EXPERIENCE WITH HIM – I THINK MY GRANDFATHER WOULD BELIEVE THAT THE SAFETY, SECURITY & WELL-BEING OF CHILDREN IS OF PARAMOUNT IMPORTANCE.

AGAIN, I MAY NOT KNOW EXACTLY WHERE GRANDPA DAVENPORT WOULD STAND, BUT I DO KNOW WHERE THOSE OF THE BIBLE WOULD STAND.

I KNOW WHERE MOSES WOULD STAND BECAUSE HIS WORDS ABOUT SUCH THINGS ARE FOUND IN THIS BOOK.

I KNOW WHERE ALL OF THE OLD TESTAMENT PROPHETS WOULD STAND BECAUSE *THEIR* WORDS ABOUT SUCH THINGS ARE ALSO FOUND IN THIS BOOK.

MOST IMPORTANTLY, I KNOW WHERE JESUS WOULD STAND BECAUSE *HIS* WORDS – AND ACTIONS – ARE FOUND IN THIS BOOK.

AND I BELIEVE THE WORDS OF THIS BOOK.

ON THIS DAY - AS WE CELEBRATE THE IMPORTANCE OF CHILDREN – THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CHILDREN IN OUR OWN LIVES & IN THE LIFE OF THIS CHURCH FAMILY – INDEED, THE IMPORTANCE OF ALL THE WORLD’S CHILDREN - IT MIGHT BE A GOOD TIME TO LOOK DEEP WITHIN OURSELVES & BE WILLING TO ASK THAT AGE-OLD QUESTION “*WHAT WOULD JESUS DO?*” AMEN.

*The Reverend Dr. Dennis R. Davenport
Eastminster Presbyterian Church
Evansville, Indiana*