

“Saying Good Things”

September 8, 2013

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When you die --- after a long and fruitful life, of course --- you will most probably be the subject of formal and informal eulogies. A eulogy is a tribute, a speech of praise. Your friends and relatives who have survived you will say wonderful things about you. They will speak of the good things that you did and said. And it would all be quite marvelous a time if not for the one disconcerting fact that you're dead!

When I worked for Chrysler Corporation I had a supervisor who, God bless him, would make a point of calling when his employees did something good. Not a lot of bosses give compliments, you only hear from them when you make a mistake. My supervisor, when you did something good, would call you and tell you that you did something good. Before telling you what that good thing was that you did, he would say, “We shouldn't have to wait until we're dead to hear all the good things said about us.”

“Good things said us”, the Greek word for that is *eulogia* from which we get eulogy. That word was translated to Latin as *bene dicere*, saying good things, or in English, benediction. *Eulogia* is most often translated in the Bible, remember the the New Testament was written in Greek, that word *eulogia* is translated as blessing, to say good things is to bestow a blessing. “I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse; therefore choose life.”

Our God created all that is by his word and as he created by his word he declared creation good! He created man in his image and likeness, male and female he created them, and said it was very good. The essence of the divine nature is to bless, to create by the divine word and declare it good, to bless. In as much as you and I are sons and daughters of our most divine Father in heaven we have the inherited duty to bless! God has called us to choose life and blessing as his people, as his children. The only alternative to choosing life and blessing is death and curses.

The problem with funeral eulogies is that they have no impact on the subject of the eulogy, because they're dead! You can say all the nice things you want or in fact you can say maledictions, say all the bad things that you want. You can say all the good things or all the bad things you want and it's all the same to the corpse in the casket. There is no change or transformation that will occur in the character or attitude of the deceased because they're dead. But hear me now, a blessing spoken in life gives life. To say good things to a friend, to your spouse, especially, to your children, is to create goodness in the world, goodness in the world the same as on those first six days of creation. To tell a child that she is loved, to tell a child that he is not alone, to tell children of God's gracious favor is to provide spiritual nourishment that will not fail.

Bless your children daily and “They are like trees planted by streams of water, bearing fruit in due season, with leaves that do not wither. Everything they do shall prosper.” The power of a word of blessing should not be underestimated. Someone once suggested that everyone we meet, whether casually or formally, everyone we meet we leave either with a blessing or a curse. You bless the person you meet or you leave them without that blessing. Good words spoken and received have the power to produce incredible effects for the good. The good words spoken by God “In the beginning” created the universe. The good words spoken by a child of God will be honored and empowered by God: To protect, to honor, to enrich, and to bless.

It is your duty, your privilege as a Christian parent, to bless your child. It is your duty, your privilege as a follower of Jesus Christ to say good words, bene-dictions, to the world that you encounter, the world for which Christ died. The truth is that failure to

bless is failure to live into your vocation as a Christian. It is failure to claim your birth right as a daughter or son of a God who is eternally blessing the world. Failure to bless is to choose death and curse. There is no creature more dead than one who never has a good word, or a blessing for another. Those people are dried up river beds and those who are planted near them wither spiritually from lack of life giving words of blessing.

So choose life and blessing. In the name of God the Father who created you, in the name of God the Son who redeemed you, in the name of God the Holy Spirit who sustains you. Bless those around you with the good words that are in your heart. Do not store up good words for a funeral. Say words of blessings every day to your spouse, to your children, and to your friends. Those words have power to protect, sustain and prosper: the one who receives the blessings and the one who blesses. Amen.