

mar 9

a very pleasant morning after a very pleasant yesterday. i know many around the world aren't entertaining that sentiment with me. believe me, i feel for them and i pray for them. but we cannot all live in that sense of dread and hopelessness that would try to ensnare us. we must warmly embraced those times the Lord permits us in these challenging times.

yesterday was one of those for me. you see, i am much alone these days. perhaps many of us are after the pandemic that has dominated this world recently. and yes, it was not just a pandemic of illness, but of fear and isolation. too many allowed themselves to entertain that fear and not rest in His loving arms.

most of my immediate family have departed long ago. distant relatives have been mostly absent over the years; distant not only in companionship but also in proximity. i guess i say all this because the Lord was really dealing with me about family every since my yesterday. yes, friends, we love and cherish them. family, they are the ones who share your blood and one hopes will be there when all others fail you.

i experienced more of family yesterday than i have in years. not my own, but God graciously allowed me to share in the love and joy of others. i felt the bond they shared, the oneness.

first, a dear friend texted me pictures of her family she spoke so lovingly and admirably of them. i felt almost as if i knew them too. as if i shared in their

dreams, plans and hope for the future. it was such a warm and intimate feeling. one i had not embraced for much too long.

then, later in the evening, another friend came over with her daughter and granddaughters. it was so wonderful to see and feel the love shared from one generation, to the next and to the next. the granddaughters were two girls, not even a year apart. they were so joyful and playful. i received their hugs and exuberance with such joy. few can know the experience this was for me.

family! it is so important. it has been so distorted from all God meant it to be. so many have never felt or given a mother's or a father's love as it should be. even in the best of situations, i believe it falls short of what God intended. this world and life we all now live has fallen short.

i think He is correcting that now. He is building a new family because, "He seeks godly offspring". mal 2:15 He sent His Son, the firstborn, to teach and show us the way; the way to act and give and love; the way to life itself. "for whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren." rom 8:29

our God does not believe in small families. this will be one which could never be comprehended. He has thrown out the invitation to as many as are willing to receive adoption into His family. "having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself,

according to the good pleasure of His will." eph 1:5

you know, they frequently give a shower at the birth of a newborn. gifts galore are lavished on the new family. we partake in that ritual also. except it will our heavenly Father passing out the gifts. and what does the word say? "if you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!". that is the most precious gift of all. but there are more to follow; not only in this life, but in the world to come.

we all mess up at times. it is family that will stand beside you. they will cry with you, dream with you, believe in you. they believe the better is always within you and will emerge. our Father's family is like that. He already knows all we have done and all we will ever do and His love covers it all. He loves that faithful Son and all that He has is the Son's also. still He longs for that prodigal son who has lost his way and will run to greet him with acceptance and an undying love.

family! yes, family is important. are you in the family? do you want to be? it is the peace we can never find in this world. it is the assurance that whatever may come, there is One who will always believe in you, love you, and want the best for you. come running! His arms await you!

linda