

Holy Spirit's Unchanging Message for You in the Midst of Sorrow's Deluge

"Mom, I had a dream," my 14-year-old daughter, D'Andra, said through tears streaming down her face.

"What was your dream about?" I asked.

She gulped and sobbed, "Jesus came in my dream and gave me a hug. He hugged me, Mom, and said, 'I love you.'"

I wiped the tears streaming down her face, and she continued, "He said, 'You belong to me' and 'You're my daughter.' I'm His daughter, Mom! I belong to Him!" I pulled her into my arms while she cried and kept saying, "Mom, God loves me!"

While D'Andra shared about her dream of Jesus giving her a hug, I felt as though God was hugging me in that moment. The rush of His love swept over me, and in that moment, D'Andra forgot about the anxiety and depression she had been fighting during her first semester in high school.

D'Andra has Down syndrome, a disability marked by mental retardation. She is a special education student, and her first semester was extremely rough. Her grades dived from honors-level to some F's. Angry outbursts, running from her teachers and principal and other incidents challenged our faith.

In the middle of this storm, God chose to give D'Andra and me a revelation of His love. I already felt like a loser mom while praying, advocating for her and reaching out to specialists for help. And I know my daughter constantly felt like a failure because she wasn't cooperating with her teachers.

Yet while we felt like failures and losers, God stepped in and

said, "I love you. You belong to me. You are my daughter."

He didn't whip me over the head with Scriptures about being a good mom or disciplining my child.

He didn't tell my daughter she was a failure because she wasn't being obedient to her teacher, which admittedly is a struggle.

Instead, God spoke in the most profound way, "I love you."

"I love you even though you struggle to cooperate with your teacher."

"I love you even though you're pulled to run away from your principal or teacher."

"I love you even though you don't want to go to school."

"I love you."

That prophetic moment revealed insight into the heart of God. Of course, I've prayed and enlisted the help of behavioral specialists, a psychiatrist and counselor to get answers into how I can help her. Plans have been created and implemented to help her succeed. Yet God revealed Himself to her as a loving Father.

"Anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love" (1 John 4:8).

God is love. He is motivated by love and moves by love. Being love-driven goes against our performance-driven culture of giving gold stars for good behavior. We want good behavior and marked-off checklists, and God wants our hearts. He wants a relationship with us. You may be in rebellion, but He still loves you. You may be trying to run away, but His love is coming after you.

"In this way the love of God was revealed to us, that God sent

His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him” (1 John 4:9).

Real love is a sacrifice He gave for your sins. He loves us and sent His Son so we might have eternal life through Him. D’Andra got a taste of eternal life in her dream. I can’t say she immediately became a cooperative student after that dream. She still has her days. Don’t we all have our down days? Yet she is secure in knowing she is His daughter and nothing can change that position.

I pray God opens your eyes to a fresh look at His love for you. Receive His love so you can go and love others.

“In this is love: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we must also love one another” (1 John 4:10-11). {eoa}

Leilani Haywood *is the online editor for SpiritLed Woman. Connect with her on Twitter or Facebook.*