

Have You Experienced ‘The Father Cry?’

The falling snow had made the roads slick, and my small truck would not make it over the large hill that led to the driveway of my house. With no other choice, I parked the truck and started the long, over-the-hill walk to the warmth of Lisa’s kitchen. The snow, the cold, the dreary sky—all seemed to fit well with the condition of my heart in that moment. Tears streamed down my cheeks, partially freezing as they fell.

Why the tears? Beyond the freezing cold that was cutting through my clothes with ferocity, my heart was unexpectedly broken. I was returning from a church meeting in which one of my spiritual fathers, the man I trusted most in the world, had just betrayed me in front of a significant group of my peers. Although his decisions and statements seemed logical and thorough, they did not make “father” sense, nor were they spoken out of love. I was hurting. Parental wounds go deep, including those from spiritual parents.

Emotions flooded my heart, and dozens of thoughts were running through my mind as I trudged along in the ever-deepening snow. *Why did he do that? Did he really mean to hurt me? What did I do wrong? Did I trust him too much? Should I have responded to him in a better way? Can I ever trust him again?*

Following years on my own ministry leadership journey, I have a better understanding of how this kind of moment can happen as a reaction to “leadership” pressure. I am also confident I have wounded spiritual sons and daughters myself through my reactions or decisions I made without carefully weighing my response from a “fatherly” perspective. We would all do well to remember that positions and leadership assignments come and go, but our deeper spiritual relationships with others are meant to last a lifetime.

All of us get wounded, usually by those closest to us. Yet, in the moment of that wounding from a perceived spiritual father, I felt alone in my pain, much like that night of crying for my earthly father not to leave, or my gush of primal grief at Pop's passing. I was not, however, alone in my *father cry*. We never are—heaven understands.

Jesus Himself knows what it is like to cry out for a father. He wept aloud several times during His ministry, such as outside the tomb of His friend Lazarus (John 11:35, 41-42) or in the Garden of Gethsemane (Luke 22:39-46). Yet Christ's most poignant *father cry* came from the cross.

The sky was dark. The pain was excruciating. The crowd was gawking. The soldiers were gambling; and Jesus was dying. Though surrounded by dozens of people, the aloneness of the cross was crushing. Every sin in human history converged on His body, compressing His heart. In that moment of moments, Christ's humanity seemed to be overwhelmed by it all until He finally screamed out, "*Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?*" (Mark 15:34).

This cry is recorded by both Matthew and Mark in the Aramaic language, the language of the common people; most believe it was the language spoken by Jesus. Several other words and phrases in the New Testament retain the Aramaic pronunciation, including the word *Abba*, used by Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. These Aramaic phrases connect us with the intimacy revealed in Jesus' cry in the garden and in His cry from the cross.

Christ's impassioned question from the cross was, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" God's only begotten Son was crying for the fellowship of His Father during His greatest moment of need.

This *father cry* from our Savior still reverberates through history, assuring each of us common men and women of His

compassion. Jesus understands the cry occurring in this generation: “In the days of His flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications with loud cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death. He was heard because of His godly fear” (Heb. 5:7).

Perhaps you know this *father cry* because you have felt forsaken by one who was a spiritual father or mother to you. Some spiritual fathers and mothers simply do not know how to be good spiritual parents. They do not want to intentionally hurt you; rather it is their own inadequacies conveyed through their actions—or lack of action—that impact your heart. Beginning the night that I trudged through the snow, I discovered the person I thought was my spiritual father did not see himself in that role, nor was he good at it. We would have a good relationship beyond that moment, but it would never be quite the same.

The residual pain in today’s world, caused by both natural and spiritual wounding, should not be underestimated. Whether through the abandonment, abuse, neglect or alienation of our natural parents or through the moral failure, self-centeredness, insensitivity and rejection of our spiritual parents, this pain is real, and it is pervasive. We must recognize, however, a deep, transformational cry that transcends parentally induced pain; it is a rising call from new generations for spiritual mothers and fathers in the 21 century.

This cry has the potential to bring a reformation in today’s institutions and a spiritual revolution in the earth. At times the cry lurks silently beneath a myriad of human activity, and at other times it swirls tumultuously near the surface of our existence. This cry is pervasive, persistent, passionate and sometimes messy. It must be answered—our legacy depends on it. It is a *father cry*. {eoa}

*The preceding is an excerpt is from **Billy Wilson’s** book,*

Father Cry. President of Oral Roberts University, Wilson has more than 32 years of ministry experience. In that time he has served in many roles and personally ministered in over 80 nations.