

"SAINTS AND SCOUNDRELS"

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"Christianity is supposed to be a community where people can wonder out-loud. A place where people don't have to park their injuries outside and the questions they have around them."

This morning I am speaking to you from an injured place...

- As many of you know, my father, who goes by the same name as me, Danny Clinton, unexpectedly passed away last Saturday. He was 61 years old and died from complications after having open heart surgery about a week earlier.

Disclaimer: This morning I'm going to share a bit more of my personal journey than I normally do...

- Along with that... I want to encourage you to filter what you hear today through the lenses of your own life...

"Spiritual Journeys are not to be viewed from the position of a spectator. They are meant to be considered and embraced."

- It's also important for me to add... That although this morning I'm speaking to you from this place
- My pain is no greater than anyone else's in the room. Others have been and/or are here as well...But this is where I am right now, and so this is where I have to be.

I'd like to start by reading you a passage...

- *(Vs) Luke 10:38-42 - "Mary and Martha"*
- *Jesus is saying... "Sitting in this circle is what matters most."*

I'd like to tell you about my Dad...

- But maybe not how you'd expect...

- People too often talk about people they love who've passed only in a glorified way...My Father wouldn't appreciate that.
- On one hand, My Father taught me that "God is Good, and God is Forever." He had an almost unwavering faith that God loved him and was for him.
- But My Father's choices taught me that you have to do more than just say the words.
- You can't live life running from your problems. Sometimes you have to stop and step into the struggle.
- These two very different wars raged within my Dad for all of his life...

This caused him to live his life split into multiple, very loud narratives...

- Making him both the most giving and the most selfish person I'd ever met; often at the same time.
- In full transparency... "I came to accept a long time ago that I was raised by both a Saint and a Scoundrel."

The Sound of a Scoundrel!

- My Father loved the music of life, but he tended to live it a bit out of key...

My Father lived his life his way, and he lived it loudly!

- He knew who he was and what he wanted... and he got bored easy and would often move on in search of the next new thing...
- At one point in his life, he even moved on from my Mom and us kids...He would later come to regret this as his life's greatest mistake.
- He admitted to me that he... *"Just didn't know how to stop the parts of his story that hurt himself and other people."*

This is because my father lived with an immense amount of unresolved trauma and pain...

- I've recently come to understand much of his life's pattern as something called_- "Survivorship Bias."
- When looking at the people and circumstances throughout his life, my dad would either focus on just a few positive experiences as if there were no problems whatsoever, or he'd blame everything on a few very negative experiences, as if all things were because of "this or that."
- Allow me to explain what this does to a life...

Illustration "Survivorship Bias"

There is a picture tracking bullet holes on Allied planes that encountered Nazi anti-aircraft fire in WW2. At first, the military wanted to reinforce those areas, because obviously that's where the ground crews observed the most damage on returning planes. Until Hungarian-born Jewish mathematician Abraham Wald pointed out that this was the damage on the planes that made it home, and the Allies should armor the areas where there are no dots at all, because those are the places where the planes won't survive when hit...

- This survivorship bias phenomenon is a logic error where you focus on things that survived when you should really be looking at things that didn't.

My father didn't recognize the things in his life that didn't survive because of his own trauma, or even the things that he did later in life that traumatized other people...

- He instead focused intensely on only those who were willing to endure his lifestyle; the ones who survived him.
- They were the "loyal ones" ; the ones "that really loved him."
- And yet, even with all this, in many ways my father was a saint!

The Saint!

- He was filled to the very top with this rare and insatiable Love for us and all we meant to him...

I am so grateful for this part of Him...

- ...he taught me that... "I can love deeply and without abandon even when I hurt or feel incomplete!"
- This is such a core message of Jesus...

(Vs) Matt. 22:37n - "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind."

- My Dad loved that way; Even with his wounded Heart, Soul and Mind...

Who loves like that? A Saint, that's who!

- **Truth:** A Friend of mine said, "Even though my Dad has been consistent in my life... He has never told me anything like that..."
- **Please:** "Say what needs to be said anyways!"

My hope is that that this encourages you to do both your Spiritual and Emotional work...

- We all have very important roles to play in the lives of those who love and need us...

This is the gift death brings to our attention...

- "A reminder to Untether from what doesn't matter in your life!"

And here's where it gets beautiful!

- ... It is Christ who still offers to sit at the center of our life's Circle and lead this time with us. His words still ring true!

(Vs) Luke 10:41b-42 - "...you are anxious and troubled about many things, but one thing is necessary. (Choose) the good portion, which will not be taken away..."

- We can choose this everyday... a truer way of living!
- A life fully gathered around what really mattered.

Three Questions:

- What in your life are you gathered around that doesn't matter?
- Who in your life needs to hear from you how much you love them?
- Are you doing the Emotional and Spiritual work required of you?