

FROM THE PASTOR'S PEN



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NO MORE OR MORE?

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I was feeding my son the other night, and he, as usual, vigorously ate until there was nothing left in the bottom of the dish. He pointed at the dish, and said “mayna mayna,” which is his word for “food please – now!” I showed him the inside of the empty dish, pointed to it and said, “no more.” My intention was to teach him what it means when there’s no more food in the bowl. The teaching exercise didn’t work as planned. Now, whenever we feed him out of a bowl, and we are not feeding him at the pace he would prefer, he points to it and says, “no more, no more.” To him this is now the proper way to say, “food please – now!”

He understands what he wants but us unable to properly communicate it. In fact, what he communicates is, by definition, the exact opposite of what he desires. He wants food, but says he wants no more. Now, as parents we get the clue. He clearly wants more food, and we accommodate what we believe he wants until he gets to a point when the proper words correspond to the present desire. This will come with his own growth, but more importantly, it will come through our teaching.

In life we are quite often plagued by the same realities, though with far less innocence than a child. How often do we, understanding what we really need, what we really desire, communicate quite the opposite with our words and actions?

When we need friendship and listening ear do we communicate “leave me alone?” When we need discipline and accountability do we communicate “I’m doing just fine, thank you?” How many of you have entered into a conversation intending

to be vulnerable and apologetic only to come across cold and a little self-righteous? How many of you intending to speak the truth in love end up stretching the truth with condemning tones? How many of you knowing that you need God, respond with “I don’t need you?”

In my own times of reflection in the aftermath of such circumstances, my only response to myself is “what was that?”

Pride has an inherent way of confusing the communication that should correspond to our inner desires. This is really the heart of sin which intends to confuse and deceive. And the more troubling thing is, what we communicate can actually reinforce deception. We can begin to believe our words more than our needs. God can speak truth to us, his Spirit can move in our hearts to reveal to us what we need to know about ourselves, and yet our response can and often does reject this word from God. God moves in us to understand that we need “more” of him, and we respond “no more.”

Fortunately, there is grace to help on the journey. The Bible says that our Heavenly Father knows what we need even before we ask it. And even when our own requests fail miserably to communicate what we really need, God’s sovereignty is at work to teach and to provide. Yet we must grow and mature. If we will listen more carefully to his words, rather than stubbornly cling to our own, if we will understand that his teaching is needed far more than our own understanding, we may just be able to say, “Can I have some more, please?” And really mean it. More grace, more grace.