

BEING SMALL BEFORE GOD
July 28, 2013 –Psalm 131: 1-3
The Church of the Covenant

I think most Mothers sing their babies sweet lullabies. My Mother bounced me on her knee and sang: “Little Too-too, little Too-too, little Too-too Broberg. Little Too-too, little Too-too, little Too-too Broberg.” If anyone calls me “Too-too” after this you’re in a lot of trouble! But even just thinking about that is calming to my soul. There is the old rocking chair that is now in my basement that she would rock me in; bounce me on her knee to calm me; and sing my own personalized lullaby to quiet me. I hope as I am speaking about this that you are remembering your own lullaby; the ways your soul is quieted; the ways when you feel like crying that you retain your peace; how you felt as a child shielded in your Mother’s arms. The Psalmist put it this way --“*But I have calmed and quieted my soul...like a child that is quieted is my soul...*” (Psalm 131: 2) Most of our souls, most of the time, are anything but calmed and quieted. Most of our souls, most of the time, are stressed and jangled, tormented and at sea. The gale force winds of stress of this life stir the waters and we are anything but calm or quieted. So the Psalmist suggests that the way to have peace is to become a little child again and re-remember what it is like to be held in our Mother’s arms, and rocked to sleep, and sung to a place of quiet, and “lullaby-ed” to a place of inner peace and calm. That’s what it’s like to be in the embrace of God and to trust HIM implicitly.

First thing, humble yourself in the presence of God. The Psalmist says “*O Lord, my heart is not lifted up, my eyes are not raised too high...*” (Psalm 131: 1) Lord, I am humble before You and in Your presence. My ego is small. The voices of my self-exaltation become small and quiet and the still, small voice of Your love for me grows louder. I am not the master of my own fate; I am not the captain of my own soul. Lord, Your Son, Jesus Christ is my Lord and Master; You are the captain of my soul and life. I cast my crowns before You, Lord, in the dust; I know I am but dust and to dust I shall return. My accomplishments mean nothing, my plaques mean nothing, my degrees are vanity, all is vanity. I am dust in the wind, a vapor here today and gone tomorrow. But YOU, O Lord, are the everlasting God. I am not too proud, not too puffed up. I am not a self-made man; I am a God-made man. I have humbled myself before the Creator of the universe; I am the creature, not the Creator. You, Lord, sit on the throne of my own life; my own ego does not. I envision myself becoming SMALL BEFORE GOD. Smaller and smaller, tinier and tinier in the presence of the vast never-ending love that has claimed me as its own. God is infinite; I am miniscule. I am tiny and needy, like the tiniest infant held in the arms of his eternal Father in heaven. When we get too big for our britches is when we have no peace in our life. When our own ego sits on the throne of our life is when we have no calm nor quiet in our life. No, I have calmed and quieted my soul by becoming small, insignificant but held in the Everlasting arms of the Lord God Almighty. Want peace and quiet and calm? **Be small before God.**

Second thing, be embraced by the presence of God. We become His child through His Son, Jesus Christ. We are sons and daughters by adoption. He has claimed us to be His own through what Jesus Christ has done for us at Calvary. He wants us. He wants to embrace us. He wants to hold us in His everlasting arms. A parent wants their child to feel they need them; we need God; people need the Lord. As we worship, as we pray, as we study, as we serve, envision ourselves placing ourselves into the lap of our Abba-Father. There is no peace apart from the Prince of Peace. There is no calm apart from God. There is no quiet other than in the presence of a Holy God. In God’s embrace we are quieted to sleep; my soul is quieted and calmed, being rocked to sleep and sung a lullaby to by the Lord God Almighty.

Third thing, "O Israel, hope in the Lord..." (Psalm 131: 3) When we place ourselves in His presence, when we feel His embrace, when we die to self, when we set aside self and become small in His presence, then it is we will feel the HOPE we always have in HIM. No matter what is happening in our life we may have calm and quiet at the center of our being, when we are being small before God. No matter what daunting piece of news we may have just received, no matter what disappointment we have just faced; no matter what thing may feel unresolved and unresolvable; no matter how impossible something may feel to us, nevertheless we may have HOPE, when we have calmed and quieted our soul in the presence of God. HOPE comes from PEACE and PEACE comes from resting in the Almighty arms of our heavenly Father who loves us; and all of this comes from humbling ourselves and becoming a child again and climbing into His lap, and hearing Him sing that song into our heart, our own personal lullaby.

Why do you have no peace in your life?????????

My Mother also did this little thing where she would raise and lower her hand over my face. When I was grumpy or sad she would have her hand go down and down and down before my face; I was allowed to be grumpy and unhappy and sad for a time. She called it being a crabby Appleton. Then she would have her hand go up and up and up before my face; I was then supposed to smile; turn the frown upside down; self-control; calm and quiet. She called it being a happy Appleton. And in such a short time, held on her lap, in the rocking chair, I would move from being a crabby Appleton to become a happy Appleton. You know, how many years of our life have we lost by holding onto being a crabby Appleton about something? How much energy and life have we wasted not letting go? Not letting go of that hurt or resentment? Not letting go of that frustration or loss? Maybe it is as simple as climbing into our heavenly Father's lap, into a place of complete safety and sanctuary and trust, and allowing HIM to raise His hand over us, up and up and up, until all that pain and loss and hurt and frustration is finally and fully turned into peace and love and joy. **Why do you have no peace in your life?????????** --Because we have not calmed and quieted our soul. --Because we have not become small before God...

Somewhere on the other side of the globe there is a Mother rocking her child to sleep. Perhaps it is in the Central Rift Valley in Kenya, or in the slums of Mumbai, India, or in the favellas of San Paolo, Brazil. The place may be foreign but the scene will feel very familiar; universally Mothers rock their babies to sleep, singing a lullaby to them, to calm and quiet their souls. And perhaps she prays for her little one; that her baby may be safe and healthy; that her baby may feel loved; that her child may be embraced by the love of God. Mothers, I believe, are pretty much the same everywhere. Their little one ceases their crying because of the safe space surrounding them, because of the love of their Mother. And wouldn't it be great and wouldn't it be wonderful if that little child was *also* enfolded into the arms of God, the God we know and who has been revealed to us through our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ? Wouldn't it be wonderful if that child received just one Operation Christmas Child shoe box packed with prayer and love? Wouldn't it be wonderful if that little one as they open their shoe box, the one you have given and filled up with love, as they open their shoe box that God opens their little heart and for the first time know that they are loved and embraced by the love of Jesus. As the shoe box opens, so is their heart opened, and they receive not just a shoebox, but they receive Jesus and know the love of God through HIM? And wouldn't it be wonderful to humble ourselves just enough, to let our own ultra-adult defenses come down just a bit, and to think that God might be calling us today to be the means to embrace that one little child, and to have them know Jesus, and to have God enfold them in His everlasting arms and to sing that little child a lullaby of God's love in Jesus Christ? It's such a small thing, really...A Mother on the other side of the globe is praying and we are the answer to her prayer. Amen.

By: The Reverend Dr. Stuart D. Broberg, The Church of the Covenant, Washington, PA
IF THIS HAS BLESSED YOU, PLEASE PASS IT ALONG TO A FRIEND!