



## *From the Pastor's Desk:*

What do a story about an earthquake that took place 21 years ago have to do with Easter Sunday? That's exactly what I said as I began to read this "Easter Reflection". In the light of recent earthquake tragedies, storms and hurricanes, I thought that we might all do well to see how God indeed is present in the darkest tomb-like moments of our life when all seems lost. God does want us to live. The Resurrection of Christ is the proof of that desire, and ours.

### **A Father's Promise [based on an article written by Mark Hansen]**

By Grant MacDonald

In 1989, an 8.2 earthquake almost flattened Armenia, killing over 30,000 people in less than four minutes. It's hard to imagine the anguish, the pain, and the suffering that began in those four brief minutes of time. In the twinkling of an eye, worlds were shaken and lives crushed. Surprisingly, such tragedies often bring out the best in people — at least they provide a wide open window to peak at the contents of each heart. Let me show you the loving heart of a father.

In the midst of chaos and destruction, he rushed to his son's school. But instead of a school, he found a shapeless heap of rubble. Imagine what went through his mind. What would have gone through your mind? Perhaps, shock would have crippled you as it did the other parents who were walking around dazed, clutching at their hearts and calling out their child's name. But in the case of this father, the sight of rubble and ruin only made him spring into action. He ran to the back corner of the building where his son's class used to be and began to dig. Why? What real hope did he have? What were the chances that his son could have survived such destruction? All he knew was that he had made a promise to always be there for his boy. It was this promise that animated his hands and motivated his heart.

As he began to dig, well-meaning parents tried to pull him out of the rubble saying: "It's too late!" "They're dead!" "You can't help!" "Go home!" "There's nothing you can do!" Then the fire chief tried to pull him off the rubble by saying, "Fires and explosions are happening everywhere. You're in danger. Go home!" Finally, the police came and said, "You're angry, distraught, but it's over. You're endangering others. Go home. We'll handle it!"

But he continued to dig for eight . . . 12 . . . 24 . . . 36 hours. Then, in the 38th hour, he pulled back a boulder and heard his sons' voice. Immediately, he screamed, "ARMAND!" Back came the words, "Dad!?" I told them! I told the other kids that if you were still alive, you'd save me! You promised me, you'd always be here for me! You did it, dad!"

A determined father, a promise kept, and a stone rolled away to reveal life and give freedom. The story of Armand's dad reminds me of the events of that first Easter when the Heavenly Father kept a greater promise by rolling away a much more difficult stone. With the rolling away of that stone, came eternal life, and true lasting freedom in Christ! And you know what? Our Heavenly Father is still in the business of rolling away stones.

What are the stones in your life? It doesn't matter how big or small they may be, Our Father is looking for you right now. He's looking through the rubble and the ruin of lives not lived for Him and He wants to roll away your stone of despair, your rock of remorse, your bolder of bondage. May you remember, or perhaps even discover for the first time, that our God has made the greatest promises ever made, and He is abundantly able to keep them all, just as He kept that very special promise to His own Son some two thousand years ago. **Acts 13:37-38** *"But the one whom God raised from the dead did not see decay. Therefore, my brothers, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you."*

I wish you all the best as you reflect upon the love of the cross and the victory of the empty tomb!

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May God +bless you, and yours, now and forever.

*Father Anthony*