

“The Unexpected Gift”

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Based on the novel: “Heaven: The Adventure begins” Jonathan Stone and The Kingdom

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As the years rolled by, Jonathan continued to explore the great vastness of the Kingdom. On the Lord’s Day, which really was every day, he was walking down the shepherd’s path that follows the River of Life as it wove its way through Emmanuel’s Mountains. He was mesmerized by its beauty. Walking down the golden path beside the river, his eyes were drawn to the grassy slopes that rose up on each side of the river, until they gave way to large rocks and then finally the high lofty peaks that could be seen scraping the clouds above. It was such a great and awesome day, a day to enjoy all the bounty the Great King of Kings had created for them. It was like a continual feast for the senses that never ended. His heart, as well as the hearts of all the people of the kingdom, were completely satisfied; for the Old Order of things had passed away and the New Order of things had come bursting forth.

As he walked a familiar voice called out to him. When he turned a great joy flooded his heart and it overflowed with thanksgiving...his daughter was running toward him. Her blond hair was loosely pulled back and braided, beautiful with the radiance of God’s glory reflected upon her. As she ran her genuine and true smile was filled with joy. She was of an average build but ran swiftly and gracefully as a deer, her white clothes blowing in the wind. She finally reached him and Jonathan eagerly enfolded his daughter Rachel in his arms and planted a kiss upon her cheek. She was such a blessing to him and brought so much joy into his heart. She was an unexpected gift from the Lord, a gift that he never expected and did not deserve to have. However, the King of the Kingdom deeply loved the heirs of the kingdom and showered down on them one blessing after another, and Jonathan was never more thankful than he was at this moment in the knowledge that it would continue throughout eternity.

As they walked down the path together, they reveled in each other’s company and their conversations were rich and filled with that special sweetness that flows from the heart of a father to his child. As they walked for miles upon miles their conversation began to slow down as they took in the beauty of the kingdom all around them. After many hours of sweet fellowship Rachel had places to go and things to do, for she had the Lord’s work on her mind. He was not sad to see her go, because the Lord had made all things right by making her a huge part of his life since he entered through the Kingdom Gates.

As she ran into the distance, a man’s voice called out to him and he turned to see his good friend Don approaching. Walking up beside Jonathan, he put his hand on shoulder and said, “Brother Jonathan, It is always good to see you.”

Jonathan replied with a broad smile and said, “It is always great to see you, my old friend.” For indeed, Don had been a good friend and a brother in the old world.

They started to walk together, and Don asked him, "Who was that you were walking with?"

With great joy Jonathan beamed, "That's my daughter Rachel."

Don turned with a surprised look upon his face and said, "Your Daughter? I did not know you had another daughter."

Jonathan replied, "I did not know either, but let me tell you the story of Rachel and all the Lord has done for both of us. It started in the Old World, as we call the shadow lands, when I was foolish and young. At that time, I did not realize how my sins and foolishness would affect my life and the lives of others. I also did not realize how the Lord could bring such joy into this world by restoring things that I had thrown away, broken or destroyed."

"Let me tell you the story about Rachel and myself. When I was young and in my late teen years, I was looking for love. I was trying to fill a void that was in my heart when I met this girl. We dated for a couple of years and we ended up sleeping together and...she became pregnant. I was young and afraid and did not think about my decisions and how they would impact my life or the lives of others."

"The girl I was dating wanted to get an abortion. But I don't think she had really thought it through either. She was also young and afraid and didn't know what to do. I think she may have confided with someone and they said she should get an abortion. Anyway, she finally approached me and told me she was pregnant and was going to get an abortion. She asked me to pay half. I didn't even think about it. I just sought out somebody I could borrow the money from. I think the person I asked may have struggled over giving me the money, but at the time I didn't think about it. I didn't go to the Clinic with her or encourage her one way or another regarding the child...our child. The memory of it saddens me. What is even worse was that she had to go alone and deal with all that. I didn't even offer to go with her. I don't think it ever entered my mind about the pain, emotions and guilt she must have felt at the time and lived with all the days of her life. I was self-absorbed and pathetic...that decision never really plagued me."

"The years when by and I never really thought about what I did. About eight years later I came to know Jesus. I prayed and asked the Lord to forgive me and cleanse me of my sins, including that one. But then, the abortion slipped back into my sub conscience and I didn't think much more about it. I guess I thought of it as the past and just left it there."

"One day, years later, a friend of mine named John said he was visiting his 25-year-old son in California. It started me thinking about how old the baby would have been if the abortion did not take place. In the years that followed, the abortion would come to my mind more and more. I would think to myself that he or she would be 30 or 35 years old, but that was the past and I could do nothing about it. Then one day I was at church and..."

At that moment a loud noise brought the conversation to a halt. Looking down the River of Life into the distance a whirlwind could be seen. As it came up the river it pulled the water up into it as it climbed high into the sky above the mountains. It seemed to fill the whole valley. It was swirling in all its brilliance when fire started appearing in the whirlwind. It started from the base of the whirlwind and continued up until it mixed perfectly with the water. As it approached, a bright light started to shine from the middle of it. It became brighter and brighter and we soon were shading our eyes. It continued up the river and seemed to engulf the whole valley between the mountains. As it was about to reach us, it

dispersed and turned into a great mist of water falling from the skies above. When the mist finally cleared, Jesus was there walking toward us on the river of life.

As he approached, we bowed down in reverence and in awe over what we had just seen. He came and put His hands on both our shoulders and said, "My Beloved, how good it is to have you both in the kingdom. You know that it was your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom, to save you and call you His own. And so too...I myself love you and have placed my seal upon you and drawn you with cords of loving kindness. Now...how would you like me to finish the story Jonathan has started so that I may show you hidden and great things? Then you can see more clearly how I have loved you and Rachel all the days of your lives."

Jonathan replied with great expectations, "Yes Lord, with all my heart, I want you to take over. I love when you reveal the deep and hidden things to us so that we may see your love, faithfulness, wisdom and compassion in wonderful new ways."

Jesus began to speak, "It was a sad day indeed. You are right. She was all alone, filled with fear and tormented by the thoughts that entered her mind and the things that would follow. As far as man was concerned she was alone. But...I was there in the midst of her aloneness. And I was there when Rachel died. That day hearts were broken, and guilt came in like a flood. As Rachel died I was there to receive her into my Kingdom. That day when death closed upon her, welcoming and loving arms had received her and embraced her. I took Rachel to my side and spoke tender words to her and put my seal of love upon her and named her Rachel. I loved her and was with her all the days of her life. To this very day my hand is upon her and she is deeply loved, and I will bless her throughout eternity."

"Jonathan, from heaven she has watched you grow from a thoughtless boy to a young man. She watched you and waited with great expectation for the day of your salvation to come and when that day came, she was not disappointed. On that day her joy could not be contained and all of heaven rejoiced with her as another sinner came to repentance."

"Rachel's eyes were not only on you, but on her mother, too. She loved her and longed for her to come to faith. Rachel's desire was that her mother would taste and see that the Lord is good, and that times of refreshing would enter her heart by my presence. If creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed, how much more would one's own family wait for their own to be saved. Rachel's eyes were upon you as you grew in the faith, and a smile could be found on her face as you began to be rooted and established in love. Excitement would enter her heart as you grasped how wide and long and high and deep is my love for you. She watched you grow, and her biggest desire was that you would know the love that surpasses knowledge, and she waited for you to be filled with the full measure of God."

"Then, Jesus smiled broadly and said, "Then Rachel's long-awaited day finally came, when she would meet you face to face." The Lord looked at both of them and said, "Carry on your story." At that moment Jesus vanished before them, but they were not disappointed, for where the sheep are, the shepherd is always close.

Jonathan and Don continued to walk down the path beside the River of Life. In the distance they could hear a great waterfall, it was known in the land as Grace Falls, and it fell thousands of feet from Emmanuel's Mountains down into a valley. They finally reached the top of the falls and looked down into the valley below, which was known as The Valley of

Light. They could see crops and trees and the Street of Gold that weaves its way through the entire Kingdom. The road shone brightly as it reflected God's presence, over the entire valley.

They each decided to continue down the falls and travel to the cliff called Rock of Ages. This cliff was thousands of feet high and there was a path that crisscrossed its way to the top. It was a place that many of the saints traveled to because of its beauty and majesty as it looked over Emmanuel's Range and the Valley of Light. They decided they would continue their story there when they reached their destination. They finally made it to the top of the cliff where there was a great plateau filled with grass, trees, flowers and bushes. They walked for a while following the edge of the cliff, until they found a spot where they could see the valley as well as the mountains that rose and fell before them in the distance.

Jonathan continued, "It is amazing how God can redeem even the things that I destroyed. I remember in Joel 2:25 where God said, 'I will repay you for the years the locusts have eaten-- the great locust and the young locust, the other locusts and the locust swarm.' God has redeemed so many things in my life it is amazing. Things I never thought of are now redeemed and made new."

With some excitement Jonathan said, "Let me continue with the story of how Rachel affected my life and so many of the people around me. As I mentioned before, one day I was at church in the old world. I was listening to a message and the Lord spoke to me or to my heart, I don't know for sure. It was clearly not from me though. All I heard was, 'Do you know you have a daughter that is alive in heaven'. "Once I heard that, I could not get it out of my mind. 'You have a daughter that is alive in heaven'. The more I thought of it, the more excited I became."

"He also impressed upon me that she has a name. I could not believe it. What was aborted was now alive and with a name. What I threw away, God picked up and redeemed. I had excitement about the idea. I have another child that is alive and well. I will meet her one day. As you now know...it is Rachel."

"It was so exciting. I went and told my pastor and I wanted to tell my kids. I remember telling my daughter who was about 25 years old at the time. I told her the circumstances and she got really excited with the idea of having an older sister in Heaven that one day she will meet and embrace. The more I thought about it, the more I desired to see her, to be with her and to know her."

"This gave me such great hope that I could not contain it and wanted to share it. I thought of all the other people that have children that have died, or have had miscarriages and even abortions. They needed to know that they were not gone...just waiting. The idea of turning that terrible memory into a glorious future was riveting and boiling over in me. I wanted to share with people, 'Your child is alive and has a name and is dearly loved. You will embrace your child in Heaven for they are with Jesus, so you must go through Jesus to be reunited with them.'"

Don responded, "What a great hope for an afflicted family, and peace for a troubled heart. The idea that God can redeem a terrible memory and turn it into hope and life and create an excitement in a heart that has been through it."

Jonathan continued, "So, here is what happened. The day I entered the Heavenly Gates, I was received by many people I knew and loved. After the people welcomed me

they stepped to the side and there was Rachel behind everyone. Her hair was pulled back like it was today and her face beamed with excitement. Tears of joy were in her eyes and she could not contain herself and she ran forward. At a glance, deep in my heart I knew who she was. No one had to tell me. It was my heavenly daughter. My heart was filled with a great love instantly and it could not be contained. When she reached me, we embraced each other, and I thought I might never let go. After a little while we pulled away so we could see each other.

She looked into my eyes and said, 'I am Rachel, your daughter and I have been watching you and waiting for you for a long time. I am so happy you are finally here. And now, we will be together for all of eternity; because just as nothing can separate us from the love of Christ Jesus our Lord...nothing can separate you from the Love I have for you in Christ Jesus my Lord.' And now,"

Jonathan added with tears in his eyes, "I can see her every day...for what God joins together he never tears apart. Our God is an awesome God and His Love endures forever. Let all the saint say, "Amen." Within seconds you could hear all the amens, echoing down through the valley. As the last Amen faded into the distance, Jonathan and Don looked at each other, smiled and then continued down the river for the next adventure in their lives.

The End, *"Of this chapter, as another one begins"*

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