

50th Wedding Anniversary Celebration

SALIENT POINTS OF MY BELOVED
PARENTS' ROLES AS SERVITORS

*Warren Berlin &
Elizabeth Ann Stathers Crummett*

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The Boitnott Room
Rebecca Hall
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Submitted With Great Respect By:

ALLAN W. CRUMMETT

Introduction

Hello! I have the privilege and honor of being Allan Warren Crummett. My name is a combination of two fine men who have striven for excellence in their lifetimes: my grandfather, Allan J. Stathers and my father, Warren B. Crummett. I was born and raised in Midland, Michigan, and my family and I now live in Muskegon, Michigan along the shores of Lake Michigan. All of my life I have lived without familial connection and without knowing where I fit. I am beginning to feel like I belong and fit in such a gathering. Connection is healing. It is good and rich to be here.

It has been with many tears, weeping and great emotion that I have produced the following remarks on two very remarkable people. This talk was assembled over a period of 7 months from many notes written on scraps of paper as well as being prompted by several books which are listed in the reference section. So that you may know where I am coming from and so hopefully I won't offend, I am first and foremost a born-again Christian whose behavior does not always conform to that which is perfect — Christ Himself. I am also a psychologist in private practice who desperately tries to function with a level of contrition, because everything that I am and wish to be is because of Christ, as I believe He is the embodiment of all that is good and true. If anybody attains any level of wholeness by being associated with me, it is because of Him. Besides my spiritual life, I am most importantly, a husband to the most wonderful woman in the world, someone who sustains me and is a joy in my life — Carrie Ann. Together my wife and I have been blessed (truly!!) by our son, Warren Luke Stathers, and our daughter, Autumn Leah Bristow. They are indeed the most precious children a man could ever be endowed with. I have been blessed with an extraordinary brother, Daniel David, and a sister-in-law, Bobbi; two nieces, Hannah and Carianne; and a nephew, Sammy. All of which I wish I could see more of.

Our family tree is mostly Christian and because of that we have received generational blessings. At this time I would like to remember and honor the names of those that are especially important to me: Viva Virginia Casto, my mother's mom; Elmer Crummett, my dad's dad; Allan J. Stathers, my mom's dad and the man I am named after, a man that I felt very close to and am very much like; Virginia S. or Maude Crummett, my dad's mom, who never wrote me a letter without mentioning, claiming and naming the Name of Jesus. It was because of her influence that my doctoral dissertation was dedicated to my Grandmother Crummett "who knew what it was like to live in Him." Her relationship to the Lord was very impacting and I felt very connected to my grandmother in the Spirit. *Lord, however the messages are conveyed in the heavenlies, please tell them we love them, or if they are in the cloud of witnesses (Hebrews 12:2) we want to say that we miss you and love you.*

These precious souls were not perfect, but they all came to the conclusion that Jesus Christ is the embodiment of all wisdom. Thus they were positionally holy. I thank them and I thank my mom and dad for submitting to their authority, because God was then able to work through my parents.

It is with these introductory remarks that I begin the most important talk of my life. I don't know if I can make it through without crying. Let me make it clear that no one is worthy of

worship except the Lamb of God, but indeed this is a covenantal vow to be celebrated and praised. I realize that most of you know my parents from one perspective. Tonight I would like to offer the perspective of the oldest son. I want you to have a glimpse into the heart and soul of these fine people.

I will present this from the perspective of oldest son, general topic of being a servant, which I then break down into four subcategories of servanthood which I have borrowed from Siang-Yang Tan (professor at Fuller Theological Seminary). They are: 1. Modeling Christ, or In the Style of Jesus; 2. Motivation for Service; 3. Servant Leaders; and 4. Acts of Service.

Modeling Christ, or In the Style of Jesus

The highest calling in life is to be a servant (Matthew 20:26-28). As Christian people we are to be obedient until death (Philippians 2:7-8). I believe, as does Siang-Yang Tan, that we meet God as a footwasher or we don't meet Him at all. Christ said that we would be blessed if we did the same thing. To be a servant is to be in pain, for the one we are trying to serve may not respond the way we would like. We grew up in an intense household and my parents experienced much pain when they were raising us. For example:

1. During the rebellious years of my life from 18-26, I hurt my parents in very deep ways. I basically told them that their values were worthless, and I treated them with disrespect, literally sticking a finger in their faces. For the times I thought I was being loved conditionally, I tried punishing them through arguing, pointing out how irrational their thought processes were and how they should listen to me, the enlightened one. I was wrong. Through the substance abuse, however, my parents were still a refuge. They stood firm, they brought hope, they continued to speak the truth. Not only did they raise me, then they helped me sanctify and they modeled perseverance. They learned the art of endurance. They reflected God's character and taught morals (1 Peter 3:9). They showed me agape. In spite of the cultural revolution in the 60's and 70's, my parents still carried the aroma of the Redeemer. Redemption costs and they paid the price. They forgave me, accepted me flaws and all, and then affirmed me as a person of value.

2. To care means to suffer; love means pain. When my brother and I hurt, my parents hurt. How do I know? They try and enter our worlds and they have helped carry our pain.

Motivation for Service

We may want to serve but we want to choose who and when we will serve. It is difficult to count others better than ourselves (Philippians 2:3; Romans 12:3). Can we continue to serve, even when there is no recognition? My parents did. Here are six examples:

1. Helping my brother and I obtain post-graduate educations.

2. When my ex-wife left me in 1987, my dad dropped everything and drove to Muskegon — 140 miles from Midland. Whenever I or my brother want to talk, my parents have time for us. I sensed that I was significant, that I had esteem, that I belonged, that God's view of me was being poured into me by my parents and consequently connection happened.

3. My dad embodies the ideals of protection, strength and advocacy. I appreciate his strengths and since we all have to forgive our parents, I have worked through most of my resentments. My dad is a hard man to live up to. He has not loved me perfectly, but has persevered with me until the "iron sharpening iron" process has produced a depth in our relationship that is deep.

4. There is no reward for rich talking. My dad calls my brother and I once per week. The conversations with my dad and my mother are rich. We have connected. My parents have taught me many communication skills like empathy and the meaning of deep connection. They have taught me to be a therapist, someone who can connect with people. Because of my parents, I now stand with others as a representative of God, persevering with others who want to persevere, so that the glory of God might be drawn out of them.

5. No one speaks your name like Jesus. I could hear my mom being used by God to speak my name and that conveyed a sense of significance. My mom was my idol when I was growing up; a woman who is highly principled.

6. In the parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32), the wayward son returning home to the father is the obvious part. The not so obvious part is how the father runs to greet his son in a not so dignified way and who takes on his son's shame. My father was never embarrassed to introduce me, no matter what state of development I was in or if I was embarrassing him. He seemed to say: "This is my son! and I love my son!"

Leading by Being a Servant, or Examples of How My Parents Led by Being Servant Leaders

To whom much is given, much is required (Luke 12:48). The higher and more financially rewarded our position in life the more it should be directed in serving others. True life is gained in service. Leaders have their time and resources available to others. Three examples of how my parents demonstrated the above are listed below:

1. My parents know that fulfillment does not come from the accumulation of things or money.
2. No matter when, my parents are available to talk. They never act like they are put out if you call. However, they do know the meaning of healthy boundaries.
3. My parents are always giving us things and asking if we want anything. They more than share of their time and resources. I can scarcely go home without my mother asking me if I

want a piece of furniture or some material possession. My dad may give me gas money as a token of "I love you."

4. I don't just love my parents, I like them. They took the time and taught me how to appreciate life: birds, nature, colleges, architecture, history, science, antiques, relationships, love and God. Their interests are interesting!

5. Leadership was demonstrated in that my family adhered to the criteria of a good strong family base: (1) My mom and dad were committed but not enmeshed; (2) We spent time together, playing games, eating together, vacationing together, playing sports together, etc.; (3) We had good communication most of the time; (4) We could and did express appreciation to each other, which is what I am doing right now in this talk; (5) Having a spiritual commitment; my parents provided for this (Genesis 33:5; Psalm 78:1-8; 127:3-5; Proverbs 17:6; Ephesians 6:1-4; 1 Timothy 2:15; Deuteronomy 4:9; 6:1-9). Our family did fairly well at persevering/solving problems in a crisis. We were not perfect; we also had issues that were not addressed, but have been more deeply examined as the family of origin matured.

Other Acts of Service

How else did my parents demonstrate servant leadership? It is in the many simple things in life that we convey servant leadership (like my mother asking us if we took our vitamins and taking us to the doctor whether we needed to go or not) . Many are listed below:

1. John Calvin said that the best way to love someone is to pray for them. My parents have prayed.

2. They have been content to go without praise.

3. They keep their commitments, their appointments, and are on time. Sometimes it is the simple things that reflect love and servanthood. Their ongoing involvement with us kept us from feeling abandoned and worthless. They disciplined us. There was always a confidence that I had in my parents. They seemed credible and confident. On family vacations, for instance, we always knew while the four of us were riding in the car, that when my father's hand came after our knees as we were misbehaving in the back seat, that we had indeed done something wrong. It's comical now that I look at it, as we scrambled around in the back seat trying to escape the dreaded knee crushing hand that seemed like it was going to destroy us if it got a hold of our legs. We had a confidence about his discipline.

4. My parents were connecting with us and it was releasing something good. It was filling my soul so that I began to think that maybe I could be used someday for the kingdom.

5. My mentor is my father. A mentor disrupts his students. He taught me to think critically and to use discernment.

6. My parents convey that they delight in me, flaws and all. Wow!! If I am "in touch" with my self-centeredness that is amazing! They convey the aroma of Christ in that way. Quoting Larry Crabb: "When we pour into another even a little of the life that, at the cost of Jesus' death, has been poured into us, connection happens. A disconnected soul begins to draw closer, to discover the life that is already there but has never perhaps been richly experienced. We realize that someone sees us as we are and still delights in us, still believes that we could become responsible, giving people, that someone sees us as fundamentally acceptable. Courage develops, hope appears, and we press on with life, eager not only to receive more connection but also to provide it for others." My parents saw something in me that was absolutely terrific in their eyes and that there was something more to me than just my problems and could tell that something good could come out of me.

Closing Statements

I have provided you with examples of how my parents were servants. Now I would like to close. Jesus taught men that God is Father. My father taught me that as well. Because I have caught a glimpse of the Father through my parents, I am better able to convey the nurturance and the aroma of Christ: a loving Father, a merciful Father, a sacrificial Father, a good Father, a highly valued Father; a highly principled mother, a sacrificial mother, a caring mother who hurt so much if she didn't think her boys were "okay," a mother who asks about whether or not I check my urine when I call to wish her a happy Mother's Day (May 10, 1998). I finished a book in May entitled, "hearing God" by Peter Lord. There is a lot of similarity between my parents' voices and that of the perfect parent. In the book there is a chapter on knowing God's voice by the results it produces: 1. God's voice brings encouragement; God's voice keeps us keeping on, to persevering; He assures us that it will turn out well according to His plan. 2. The enemy will bring up past failures; God's voice brings us peace. 3. God's voice will bring you sympathetic understanding. It will not be condemning. 4. God's voice will bring you hope. 5. God's voice will sustain and create faith. 6. God's voice will produce gratitude. Thanksgiving and praise flow from grateful hearts. "A grateful heart cannot help overflowing with thanks and offering praise." I praise God for my parents, because of their faithfulness.

Robert Lewis Stevenson said: "People, all people sit on the threshold of their personalities and call out to the world for someone who will come and love them." That day in April 1979 when I was thrashing around in bed from acute alcohol withdrawal and cocaine poisoning at the age of 26, I remembered the God of my forefathers and my father, who so many times, after I had unleashed my anger on him would stand with outstretched arms basically saying, "Come here, Allan, I love you." When I had recovered enough from being sicker than I ever had been in my life, I called home to my mother, and as my voice cracked, I told her that I had accepted Jesus Christ into my life. I'll never forget the sound on the other end of that phone in Midland, Michigan: "Oh Allan, Allan, oh Allan." The most heartfelt, empathic, connecting response I had ever heard in my life. That is parenting!! Because of persevering, forgiving love that penetrated to the very core of my soul, I came to the light of Christ (Ephesians 5:8).

In my profession you have to be careful not to label someone because then you start to look at a person through the lens of that label. Once you label them you stop diagnosing and

assessing. One label I like, however, that is not limiting and should cause people to be prejudiced in a positive direction, is the label Crummett. I am honored, glad, proud, thrilled, privileged and maybe prejudiced because of what I've seen. I am thrilled to be a Crummett.

Nothing is the way it is supposed to be, but in the Crummett household, we caught a glimpse of heaven. We belonged!! There was a sense that you fit. I know of no one I'd rather be than a Crummett. I'm the luckiest man alive to be the husband of Carrie Ann Crummett, the father of Warren Luke Stathers Crummett and Autumn Leah Bristow Crummett, the brother of Daniel David Crummett, the brother-in-law of Bobbi Price Crummett, the uncle of Elisabeth Hannah Crummett, Carrienne Stathers Crummett and Samuel Christopher Crummett, and the son of Warren and Betty Ann Crummett, my mom and dad. They have truly worshipped at the feet and placed others ahead of themselves. There is no finer.

This man, Warren B. Crummett and this woman, Elizabeth Ann Stathers, that God has joined together, my mom and dad, produce good stuff, my brother Dr. Daniel David Crummett.

Final Comment

I hope this is not the last time I see this beloved family and friends. Please embrace Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior so that we can be assured of another meeting. Blessings on this family tree!

INFLUENTIAL BOOKS

1. Moon, Gary. *Homesick for Eden*.
2. Lord, Peter. *Hearing God*.
3. Crabb, Larry. *Connecting*.
4. Langberg, Diane. *Counseling for Sexual Abuse* (a remarkable book that relates to all human functioning and deep connecting).
5. Tan, Siang-Yang. *Disciplines of the Holy Spirit*.