

'Son, I'll Be There for You'

A fascinating story came out of the 1988 earthquake that almost flattened Armenia.

That deadly tremor killed more than 25,000 people in less than four minutes. In the midst of all the confusion of the earthquake, a father rushed to his son's school. When he arrived, he discovered the building was as flat as a pancake.

Standing there, looking at what was left of the school, the father remembered a promise he made to his son: "No matter what, I'll always be there for you!"

Tears began to fill his eyes. It looked like a hopeless situation, but he could not take his mind off his promise.

Knowing that his son's classroom was in the back, right corner of the building, the father rushed there and started digging through the rubble. As he dug, other grieving parents arrived, clutching their hearts, saying, "My son!" or "My daughter!"



They tried to pull the father off of what was left of the school, saying: "It's too late!" "They're dead!" "You can't help!" "There's nothing you can do!" "Go home!"

Even a police officer and a firefighter told him he should go home. To everyone who tried to stop him, he said, "Are you going to help me now?"

They didn't answer him.

He continued to dig for his son. Stone by stone, he dug for his son.

He needed to know: "Is my boy alive, or is he dead?"

The father dug for eight hours, then 12, then 24, then 36. Finally, in the 38th hour, as he pulled back a boulder, he heard his son's voice.

He screamed his son's name, "Armand!"

And a voice answered him, "Dad? It's me, Dad!"

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Then the boy added these priceless words: "I told the other kids not to worry. I told 'em that if you were alive, you'd come to save me, and when you saved me, they'd be saved, too. You promised that, Dad. 'No matter what,' you said, 'I'll always be there for you!' And here you are, Dad. You kept your promise."

That story calls to mind the parable of the lost sheep, told by Jesus.

What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the 99 in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, "Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!" (Luke 15:4-6 NKJV).

Jesus later proved His fatherly love by dying on a cruel cross for the sins of the people, was resurrected from the dead, and sits at the right hand of God. His sacrifice assured eternal life for those who believe and trust in Him. That's the ultimate power of love.

– Beecher Hunter