

Black Bees and Unanswered Prayers

by Glen Lawrence



My son has autism. The biggest impact is his emotions. Everything is magnified. Disappointment is despair. Happiness is ecstasy. Worry is terror. Common, everyday events become tremendous obstacles. He cannot move forward, particularly in the case of perceived threats.

Recently my son asked me to pray with him, because he was “scared of the black bees at school.” These “monsters” threatened his favorite class at school. They made enjoying recess impossible. While other kids were running and laughing, he was constantly on the lookout; ever fearful of the impending doom they represented to him. So, we prayed together. My son’s prayer was simple and beautiful. “God, make the black bees go away. I am scared of them. I know you can do anything.”

The next morning found me still praying. I begged God to do something about those bees. For me this was a tremendous opportunity for my son to experience firsthand the faithfulness of God. Also, in light of both my son’s autism and my wife’s bout with cancer, I felt like God owed me one. Recent events in my life had me feeling confused at best and discouraged at worst. A constant flood of bad news and situations was pressing down upon me. I was caught in an ocean current, struggling against a powerful undertow that slowly but steadily pulled me away. Every day was a struggle to stay afloat.

But every time I managed to come up for air another wave hit me. As silly as black bees might sound to you, they were that serious to me. Yes, I had prayed for God to take care of them. But in my heart I was really crying out for a sign that He still cared.

When I got home that day my son came running to greet me with his customary hug. I wasted no time asking the one question that had weighed upon my mind all day. “What happened to the bees?” My son’s response was a look of painful confusion and concern. “Dad, God didn’t make them go away.”

The remainder of the evening was a struggle. As I thought on those bees, I wondered why God didn’t respond. I wondered why He had allowed my son to have autism in the first place. I wondered what I was doing wrong in my life. Most of all I felt two things. I felt ashamed. And I felt afraid. Ashamed that 20 years of ministry had left me so ill-equipped to deal with life. Afraid as I wrestled with the thought that decades of belief were becoming unglued. And I covered before the idea that maybe God really didn’t care (or even existed for that matter). And all because of some black bees...

The next morning I awoke to a simple thought. “Call the school and tell his teacher.” One phone call did the job. The custodian took care of the problem with a can of Raid. The issue was resolved. My son was able to enjoy recess again. But in my spirit I continued to wrestle with God and His seeming indifference to the previous day’s dilemma as well as the much larger problems in my life. Presently, I have a number of “black bees” that are tormenting me. No, they are not flying insects but their “sting” is a hundred times worse. Just like my son I too have prayed and have had to come to grips with the reality of unanswered prayer. I know God is able. I am confident that God can do anything. I just don’t know why He seemingly won’t answer, why He won’t respond. At the end of the day all I want is for those “black bees” to go away. That’s all.

Too many times as Christians we ignorantly embrace the belief that faith is an exemption from pain and suffering. I’m just trying to be honest and transparent. No, I’m not angry at God. But I still have issues that leave me asking “Why?” In the next few blogs I am going to examine some of the things that God has shared with me over the years and recent months regarding suffering and disappointment. I

don't pretend to have all the answers. But if you're interested, then I encourage you to join me in this journey. Together, we can take the Raid of His Word and see what it can do to those "black bees" that plague each of our lives.