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THE PLUMBER

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Have you ever had one of those days where nothing seemed to go right?

My family and I had grand plans to go to the pool one sunny Sunday afternoon. It was a beautiful warm day and we like to go swimming. My children were excited and I liked the thought of spending time with them at the pool.

After enjoying our lunch we began to make plans to go to the pool. But because it was a hot day, I thought I'd just check what was happening in the garden. I discovered that there was some wet ground in the front yard near our dripper watering system. The ground was so damp I thought I had better dig it up to see what was happening. The more I dug, the more water I discovered. I thought about calling a plumber but it was a Sunday and hopefully it was only a small leak that I could fix myself. Besides, a plumber might not be available or might cost too much for a Sunday afternoon.

The leak wasn't small. I ended up digging a very big hole in the ground. Along with battling hundreds of ants, it was hot, and water kept spilling into the hole. My hands were sore from digging and my knees were sore from kneeling on the hard ground. After digging through the sticky hard clay, I discovered that the pipe had a crack in it. The join needed replacing. But I couldn't simply stop and leave it for another day. The leak was too big to simply leave it as it was. By removing the hard sticky clay, I had removed the barrier that was limiting the amount of water that was escaping. Either I had to turn the water off so we were going to go without water in the house, or we would have a pool in our front yard, or I could fix it.

The idea of going to the swimming pool with my family had started to evaporate. Although I was making a small pool at our house, just a bit muddier. I thought about the plumber again, but if only I could get the right part I could fix it and we would be on the way to the swimming pool. So we drove to the local hardware store with the old broken parts to buy replacement parts. We were helped by a knowledgeable person who knew about pipes. He didn't have the exact part we were after but something better, or so we thought. So we bought the part and headed back home to fix the pipe.

After taking the pipe apart I tried fitting the new join. The new part was slightly too small, but large enough to get the hose through part of it. It didn't fit. Ahh, this job was turning out to be very stressful. I tried and tried to put the new part on the pipe. I even shaved some of the outside of the pipe off. I could get it on one end but not the other end as I couldn't shave that end of the pipe down. I thought about calling the plumber but if only I could get this join on it would be fixed.

This inspection of the garden was turning into a very stressful afternoon. Should I call the plumber? No, I had another idea. I decided to use the old connections but swap them around. If only I could align the pipes I might be able to fix it. So after putting all of the connections back together in my pit of mud and ants in the hot sun, I slowly turned the tap back on. I held my breath hoping that it would all be fixed and I would be a hero. Sadly it didn't take long for water to start gushing out of the crack again. In fact, it actually looked worse than the initial leak from 5 hours earlier.

By now our afternoon at the swimming pool was turning out to be a run under the sprinkler in the back yard with maybe a water bomb fight. I was stressed out and exhausted. I had given up. My only option was now to call the plumber. So I called the plumber who after hearing my story of desperation offered wise advice and more importantly, a listening ear. I wasn't much help to him as I didn't know the technical language and specifications of the pipes and joins but he was patient and kind and he worked through my awkward descriptions. He offered to come around the next day despite his busy schedule and see what could be done to fix it.

I was relieved. And I felt a little silly that I hadn't called him 5 hours earlier when I started my inspection of the wet ground in the garden. I went in to tell my family and to say sorry for not taking them to the pool. There wasn't even time for a run under the sprinkler. The best I could offer was a bath before bed. There they were, in their bathers, still waiting for their dad to take them to the pool. I felt that I had let them down. My pride in trying to go it alone and fix the problem myself only served to hurt the people I loved and myself. I had let my family down. I wasn't a hero.

Why do we do that to ourselves? Why do we think we can go it alone despite all of the stress? Why do we put ourselves under so much stress when there is someone who can help? Why didn't I call the plumber at the start?

Thankfully, I had a plumber who was very patient and kind. Who offered to help me despite it not even being his problem. God is like this patient and kind plumber. But even better. God fixes more than the leak in the garden. He can fix our lives. He can remove the worry and stress in our lives by taking it into his hands and guiding us through it. And he is not far away. We don't need to use a phone, it doesn't cost anything to ask him for help. He is with us offering his help and guidance. He is always available, 24/7. When we call, he listens. Even right now. Ready to help and guide. Ready to take your worries onto himself and to help you through.

He offers all of this through Jesus Christ. By calling out to Jesus, God listens. Anytime, anywhere, and to anyone. What's best of all, he doesn't charge us for his help. This is because what it cost to help us has already been paid. The cost for us to receive God's help was beyond what we could pay. We don't deserve God's help, but because of God's great love for us and Jesus' sacrifice on the cross and resurrection, we can use Jesus' name to call on God for help.

So we don't need to struggle through life on our own. We don't need to live in fear, regret, and our worries. Jesus doesn't want us to stress out and worry. He wants us to trust in him and give him our fear, regret, and worries. Jesus once said, "Don't worry about your life. Don't worry about having something to eat, drink, or wear. Isn't life more than food or clothing? Look at the birds in the sky! They don't plant or harvest. They don't even store grain in barns. Yet your Father in heaven takes care of them. Aren't you worth more than birds?"

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to be a bird? To fly into the sky and live a simple life with your family and friends being provided with food from the land. The birds survive because God gives them food. And God loves us much more than birds. So Jesus calls us to, "put God's work first and do what he wants. Then the other things will be yours as well. Don't worry about tomorrow. It will take care of itself. You have enough to worry about today."

So why struggle through life on your own, like I did with the leak in the garden? Call on Jesus and ask him for help.

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