

Daily View

“But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called ‘today’” Hebrews 3:13

April 30, 2020



Folsom's kids, one of our greatest blessings. This photo, circa 2003. Can you identify some of them?*

The Peter Pan Hat Caper

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.” Ephesians 6:1

I'm about 8 years old. On Saturday, our family had just visited a brand new amusement park called “Disneyland.” While we were there, my brother, Chuck, 4½ years old, had acquired a green, Peter Pan hat, complete with feather.

The next day, on Sunday, Chuck wanted to sit in the front pew which he had done before without incident, so mom and dad allowed it. This time, he pleaded with them to let him take his new hat up there with him. My little brother was very persuasive and, to my amazement, my dad permitted him to keep the hat with him, but with a stern warning, “Charles Edward, don't you *dare* put that hat on until after church.” He nodded quickly in agreement, of course, and the service began.

The scene is set: dad in the pulpit, Chuck on the front pew, hat sitting harmlessly next to him, my mom and I sitting about 6 pews back. Midway through my dad's sermon, mom, to her horror, and me, to my delight, see Chuck place the hat on his head. I'm actually laughing to myself, “my brother is DEAD MEAT.”

All mom and I can see is the hat and the feather. When my dad sees it, he stops preaching, looks down at Chuck and with his deepest, most draconian voice, says, “*Take... that... hat... off RIGHT THIS MINUTE.*” What happened next filled me with glee. With dad's finger pointing at him, and in spite of the glare, we see the feather moving from side-to-side as Chuck shakes his head “nah.”

I thought my dad was going jump down from the pulpit and grab Chuck, and drag him somewhere, but mom beat him to it. I don't think I ever saw her move that fast before, or after.

Of course, I'm all aglow because my little brother, who everyone thought was so cute and who got by with murder day-after-day-after-day, was really going to get it this time. I dreamed about the little squirt's crying and bawling and whimpering after his whippin'. My prayers had been answered. “This is truly the Lord's day,” I thought to myself. “How dare my little brother profane it!” I didn't really put in those terms back then, but my righteous indignation was real.

After services, we get in our Pontiac and begin the five mile drive home. In those days there were no car seats — there weren't even any seat belts. So, the first thing Chuck does when we're all in the car on our way out of the parking lot is to stand on the hump in the back and put his little arms around both my mom and dad, calmly tapping their shoulders.

Mom says to him, “Chuck, what do you think you're doing?” He says, “I'm makin' fwriends.” He stayed in that posture for the entire trip home. He probably even kissed my mom on the cheek a time or two; I was too disgusted to look.

I'm not sure what punishment my brother received, but I don't think Chuck received the wrath due him that day. I believe he received a huge dose of grace instead, first from my mother, who probably then interceded for him like Abraham interceded for Sodom, although mom had more success.

At the time I thought it was a terrible miscarriage of justice. But as I've grown older, I've thought about how many times, even as an older person, I have put my Peter Pan hat on and shook my head NO to God, and then, afterwards, “made fwriends” (we call that confession and repentance)... and God forgave me. Just because, that's what God does. Reminds me of Psalm 103:8-10,

The Lord is merciful and gracious,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.
He will not always chide,
nor will he keep his anger forever.
He does not deal with us according to our sins,
nor repay us according to our iniquities.

Chuck got off the hook and I'm OK with that now. The Lord knows how many times he has let *me* off the hook. *Grace is great and great is his faithfulness!*

Listen: “Great Is Thy Faithfulness”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=li2zzc41z5Q>

**I can identify several but not everyone of them.*