

Bermudian Church of the Brethren

WEDNESDAY's WORD – a midweek thought from Pastor Larry M. Dentler

to share a word of inspiration ... encouragement ... challenge ... a smile ... in the middle of your week
August 10 in the year of our Lord 2016 - #659

Tractor Memories

This Sunday is Bermudian Church of the Brethren's **"Drive Your Tractor to Church Sunday & Farm Family Blessing."** This began in 2013 as a re-imagining of those "Rural Life Sundays" of decades ago. A day to celebrate the farm life! We've re-focused it to be a time to ask God's blessing upon our many farm families, recognizing that our farm families, work hard, face many dangers, face many uncertainties ... and are a blessing to us all! We added the "Drive Your Tractor..." part as an added fun part of the day. That line up of tractors on the parking lot is a beautiful symbol of our farm families of which we are so proud! We began in 2013 by going to some local agri-businesses and asking if they'd be willing to donate some things for door prizes. To my amazement many of these business owners were excited to be able to share some gifts as their way of saying *"thank you"* to our farm families. Here at Bermudian we always have a lot of fun bantering about the age old International Harvester (IH) vs. John Deere (JD); red vs. green debate. Our largest farm family, Cedar Hill Farms, is green through & through! And when I was growing up, in the 1950s my father operated an IH dealership in Dillsburg (Dentler & Sultzbaugh) – so I'm quite red! But we always stir into the mix some orange ones, gray ones, blue ones – some Allis Chalmers, Massey Ferguson, Case, Co-Op, Ford ... it's always fun to see what lines up on the parking lot!

When I think of those days at my Dad's "shop" (as we always referred to it), along what is now old Route 15 south of Dillsburg, I have some great memories. Drinking soft drinks in glass bottles out of the old soda machine. The tan colored IH part tags, with key punch holes, tied with wire onto the new parts in the bins. Going with Dad to area farms as he installed some of the first automated milking systems in the area (Chor-Boy). It's fascinating to me that some of those very farms where I played as my Dad worked on the new fangled milking parlors are now part of Cedar Hill Farms. And, I remember sitting along Route 15 on the used tractors for sale, with the neighbor boy Jason, pumping our arms at the passing tractor trailers flying by on the two lane highway to get them to blow their air horns.



And there are some not so good memories. Like Dad helping a farmer on a Saturday when the shop was actually closed. The jack breaking allowing the tractor to fall on Dad's foot smashing it flat as a pancake. Dad begged the doctors not to amputate his foot which was their first inclination. They saved the foot after a long reconstruction surgery and a long recovery. He walked with a limp the rest of his life, and gained the nickname, "Footsie," from neighbor Dick Mumper.

Ahhh, what memories, and so you see why I so thoroughly enjoy our "Drive Your Tractor To Church Sunday & Farm Family Blessing," even the red vs. green banter with Jim Eisenhower, and the privilege to hold our farm families before the Lord for His blessing, protection and care. When the tractors line up on the parking lot of the Church, in a way I'm back in my childhood along Route 15. And I know my Dad is observing from heaven with a smile.

Two application thoughts today. First, two little boys sitting on tractors with their arms pumping furiously, hoping for an air horn toot. It reminds me that when we call out to the Lord, cry out to the Lord ... He is always listening and ready to respond! No matter what you are going through, no matter how alone you feel, no matter how hopeless the situation seems ... cry out to Him! He hears!

"In my distress I called to the Lord; I cried to my God for help. From His temple He heard my voice; my cry came before Him, into His ears."

Psalm 18:6 NIV

Second, on that terrible Saturday when the jack broke and the tractor came down hard smashing Dad's foot, pinning him under the weight of the tractor, the farmer went running into the shop to get another jack. But he wasn't familiar with the shop and it took a long time until he got back with a jack. When he got back Dad was sitting alongside the tractor with his smashed foot free. How did he get his foot free? Who lifted the weight of that tractor off Dad's injured foot? Adrenaline? An angel? Dad always believed that the Lord had been present with him and that getting the foot out from under the tractor as quickly as possible may have made the difference in saving his foot. Are you in a tight place? Feeling smashed? Let the Lord be your Lifter!

"The Lord helps the fallen and lifts those bent beneath their loads."

Psalm 145:14 NLT

Pastor Larry <><