

## Searching for Our Roots

Peter is a friend from our Bible study at work. Recently, he and his wife traveled to China to seek out his family's roots. He had very few clues to go on and quickly found out that the ones he had would not help in discovering much about his grandfather's life and any surviving kin.

Peter's last name turned out to be very common in that area with a third of the population have that name. Peter had heard that his grandfather had built roads; but that fact was not unique as many roads in the area were built by individuals. One clue was a photo of Peter's grandfather standing in front of his distinctive Spanish architecture house in China. Peter hoped that if all else failed, perhaps he could locate his grandfather's house by just driving around in their hired car. Peter was told that many people in that area had homes with Spanish architectural influences because their ancestors had built them when they returned to China after working in California during the Gold Rush era.

After some inquiries, he met an elderly person who seemed to know the grandfather's identity from the few clues Peter had given. Unfortunately, Peter was told that his grandfather was a gunrunner and a thief and an embezzler – actually a pretty notorious one in that area.

This was not the news that he had expected to learn. Peter was very extremely disappointed. Peter asked if there were any surviving relatives were in the area and the person said he was pretty sure that they had all died off. He was referred to nearby restaurant owner that might know more but that man confirmed that there were no living relatives left in that family. The life of crime had taken its toll on that family and they had all died. Sadly, it became obvious to Peter that his quest to find out about his grandfather and any relatives was at a dead end. Peter was the grandson of a thief and had no living kin left in China.

Trying to make small talk, the restaurant owner mentioned to Peter that some of his relatives had immigrated to North America. There was a relative in Seattle. Peter mentioned he also had a relative in Seattle. Now this is not too unusual because Seattle has a large Chinese community. There was also a relative in Toronto, Canada and Peter remarked how unusual that was as he also had an Aunt in Toronto. Soon they were connecting the dots and it became obvious that Peter and the restaurant owner were indeed cousins. There had been a major case of mistaken identity. The man who was the thief and embezzler was not a relative at all but a member of another family that lived near Peter's grandfather.

The restaurant owner shared who Peter's grandfather really was. He was a prominent man in the community. He helped people with money to start businesses. He explained further that Grandfather was a wealthy man but helped others and indeed built a road and dug wells that were still in use today. He had been fair with his tenants and charged reasonable rents that seldom were raised. He was the type of man that had great influence by his stature in the community. Peter got to meet others who remembered his

Grandfather and all the wonderful things he had done. He was the type of man with morals, wealth, and influence that the Communists would not want around so he had been executed and his property confiscated.

Peter soon was sitting in a home, eating and visiting, surrounded by other relatives who were glad to welcome this lost relative into their fellowship. It was a bit like a dream as he had gone from no living relatives to many relatives in just a few hours. Peter now knew that the stock and lineage he came from was good and compassionate. Peter now had Grandfather's wonderful example to strive towards.

A short time later, Peter's cousin asked him if he would like to see Grandfather's house. A few kilometers away Peter saw the unusual house he remembered in the old photo. All that was missing was grandfather in the foreground, but Peter's grandfather and his legacy were now forever captured in Peter's heart.

Just like Peter - You and I are on a quest to discover our Heavenly father. Our own earthly fathers may have given us a bad example of what a father is. They may have been physically or emotionally absent. They may have been a thief, as Peter thought at first, and stolen much and given little to our lives. They may have not even earned the right to even be called "Father". Well-meaning people may have given us bad information and told that our Heavenly Father can't be trusted and that He is distant and uncaring. We must discover for ourselves the real truth of who He is. In that process we will likewise discover our kin in caring brothers and sisters that join us in our quest. For some of us, it will be sooner and for others of us, later on. But some great day we will get to see our Father's house.

If we really want to know who our heavenly Father is, we have the wonderful example of Jesus – the visible expression of the invisible God to strive towards.

<sup>COL 1:15</sup> He is the image (visible expression) of the invisible God

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