

Down Home: Missed opportunities and the heart of God

May 17, 2013

The last time we gathered on this spot, [I told you](#) about the experience my grandson, Ezra, and I had at the Dairy Queen.

This happened a few weekends ago. Ezra and his mother (my older daughter), Lindsay, came to town. Lindsay went to see *Wicked* with her sister, Molly, and her mother (my wife), Joanna.

Ezra did great when I picked him up from the nursery after church, brought him home for lunch, played trains, read books and went down for a nap.

Where's mama?

But when he woke up about an hour early from his nap, he was some kind of upset his mama wasn't home.

He kept crying and calling out, "Muh!"

"Mama will be home before long," I promised him. But clearly, he didn't believe me—or at least affirm my definition of "long."

Attempting to distract him, I volunteered to take him out for some ice cream. He said he didn't want any, but I didn't believe him.

So, I contorted his little body into his carseat, and we drove to Dairy Queen, where I ordered two frosty treats.

Normally, Ezra goes for ice cream. But on this occasion, he might as well have been back home. “Muh!” he pleaded, between sobs, as the other DQ patrons eyed us suspiciously and I used the word “grandson” profusely to signal that I am, indeed, his grandfather and not a kidnapper.

Ezra refused to taste even a smidge of his frozen dessert. So, eventually, I threw \$2.63 worth of melted ice cream in the trash, and we went to the park to see the ducks.

Now, when I drive past Dairy Queen, I remember the little guy sitting on my lap, crying for his mama. And I remember how helpless I felt when I couldn’t cheer him up and/or distract him from his forlorn state.

Lindsay called the other day, and Ezra apparently remembers our outing, too.

Marv. Ice cream.

“Every time we drive past a Dairy Queen or a DQ commercial comes on TV, Ezra stops what he’s doing and says: ‘Marv. Ice cream,’” she reported, laughing.

Of course, we don’t know whether he’s (a) deeply scarred and will avoid DQs for life, (b) still mad that I Shanghaied him to a place he didn’t want to go, (c) remorseful for not eating perfectly good ice cream or (d) blissful because he remembers his granddad loves him and showed it by buying him ice cream.

I hope it’s (d), and the next time Ezra and I go out for ice cream, we gobble it up until we get brain freezes.

Meanwhile, I’ve been wondering how much I’m like Ezra. How many times has my Heavenly Father set a splendid treat right before me, but I refused to enjoy it because I focused on something else or on what wasn’t exactly

right in my life?

When I act like that, I'm sure I break the Lord's heart about as much as Ezra broke mine that afternoon.