

895 Words

Darion's Gift

by

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Darion stomped through the door and kicked his sandals into the corner. He flopped onto the bench beside the kitchen table and covered his face with his hands.

“I hate Silas! I never want to see him again!”

Mother paused from kneading the bread dough she was preparing for the evening meal.

“Darion, what’s the matter?”

“It’s not fair. He always wins when we race home. I’m too slow.”

“Darion, each of us is different. Some people, like Silas, are athletic. You are a scholar. It takes all of us to make a strong nation.”

“I would rather run fast than read fast. Bah! I hate Silas.”

“Go and gather some wood for the oven. When you smell fresh bread baking, you will feel better.”

Darion retrieved his dusty sandals and walked to the wood pile. As he was gathering sticks, Mr. Phinehas waved across the stone wall that divided their yards.

“Hello, Darion! How was school today?”

“Just fine, Mr. Phinehas. We are studying Moses.”

“Ah, good boy. We need helpers in the synagogue and you must work hard. When the time comes, I will put in a good word for you. Maybe you will one day be our Rabbi.”

“Mr. Phinehas, the boys at school are talking about the carpenter’s son, Jesus, and the amazing things he does. How can he make sick people well?”

“Darion, I don’t know. Mr. Tertius told me Jesus will be at the meeting place on the mountain tomorrow. Many of our neighbors are going. Would you like to join me?”

“Oh, could I? I will ask Mother.”

Darion forgot the wood for the oven as he raced into the house to discuss the trip. Mother hugged him and patted his back.

“Darion, of course you may go. I will pack a lunch for the long walk.”

Darion barely slept as he tossed on his mat waiting for the first rays of dawn. Mother did not have to call him three times as she did on school mornings. He brushed the wrinkles from his robe and waited patiently as Mother gently combed his hair.

“You have to look your best, Darion. And remember to watch your tongue. Young men should listen, not speak, when surrounded by their elders.”

“I will make you proud, Mother.”

Darion ate apple slices for breakfast while Mother packed a small basket.

“I am giving you extra bread and fish in case Mr. Phinehas is hungry. Be sure to share!”

“I will, Mother.”

He grabbed the basket, and ran to the gate. Darion and Mr. Phinehas walked to the mountain with the other men of the village. They sat in the grass and waited for Jesus.

The murmur of whispered voices alerted the crowd that Jesus and his followers had

arrived.

“Darion, there he is. Can you see him?”

Darion stretched his head high to see over the men gathered around him. His heart pounded with excitement.

“Yes, Mr. Phinehas, I see him.”

Jesus spoke with a kind voice, and the day flew by as Darion listened. He marveled at the ideas Jesus shared.

As evening approached, he thought the crowd would break up soon. Good Jewish men never miss the evening meal. Darion was hungry, ready to eat his lunch, but Jesus continued to speak.

One of the men who traveled with Jesus stooped beside Darion.

“What’s in the basket?”

“It’s my lunch, sir.”

Darion held the basket as the man inspected the food. The man nodded and moved on. Darion, certain he was in trouble, no longer felt hungry. Moments later, the man returned, and picked up Darion’s basket.

“You need to come with me. Jesus would like to meet you.”

Darion was terrified as they weaved through the crowd. Jesus was smiling. Was that a good sign?

“Jesus, this is the lad with the lunch.”

“Thank you, Andrew. Hello, Darion.”

“How do you know my name, sir?”

“I know more than your name. I know you are a gifted student who works hard at learning.

I know you have a curious nature, and are willing to work hard to dig up facts. And I know you, like your father, have a heart that loves others.”

Darion’s lip quivered. His father died years before, and Darion missed him.

“Darion, I need your help. We have a large crowd of hungry people, and you are the only one who brought food today.”

Darion figured talking to a crowd was hard work, and he would gladly give his lunch to Jesus.

“Here, sir. You can have my lunch.”

Jesus accepted Darion’s basket and bowed his head to give thanks for the food. An amazing thing happened. Jesus broke the bread and fish into pieces and handed the food to his followers to share with the crowd. Every man, woman, and child ate until they were full. The leftovers filled twelve baskets. Jesus returned Darion’s basket.

“Darion, here is your lunch. Please tell your mother the bread is delicious. My young friend, you were not made to be a fast runner. You are a student of Scripture, and someday your knowledge will help others. The best gift is the one we use, the one we give away by sharing with others. Like your lunch.”

Darion and Mr. Phinehas walked toward home. They were filled with wonder over the small lunch that became a huge gift.