

I recently received a delightful e-mail. After having dug to a depth of 10 meters last year, Scottish scientists found traces of copper wire dating back 100 years and came to the conclusion that their ancestors already had a telephone network more than 100 years ago.

Not to be outdone by the Scots, in the weeks that followed, British scientists dug to a depth of 20 meters, and shortly after, headlines in the UK newspapers read: 'British archaeologists have found traces of 200 year old copper wire and have concluded that their ancestors already had an advanced high-tech communications network a hundred years earlier than the Scots.'

One week later, 'The Nordic Klub', a Bismarck, North Dakota newsletter reported the following: 'After digging as deep as 30 meters in corn fields near Highmore, Ole Johnson, a self taught archaeologist, reported that he found absolutely nothing. Ole has therefore concluded that 300 years ago North Dakota had already gone wireless!

Ole found a way to deal with the disappointment of not being first in communications, by "reinterpreting" some facts. I love that little story. But it raises an interesting question for me, how do you deal with disappointment? How do you deal with it when things don't go the way you want them to, or expect them to, or even hoped them to?

Do you quit and move on to something else? Do you change the facts to get a different ending? How do you deal with disappointment?

Each of us has to find a way to deal with the disappointments of life. We learn how to do this by watching others, our parents, our family members, people we get to know along the journey of life. Some of the lessons we learn actually help us live healthier lives.

Some don't. In our scripture for today, we are meeting Joseph as he faces a huge disappointment in life.

He is engaged to Mary, and he discovers that she is going to have a child. He also knows that the child is not his. We are told that when he discovered she was pregnant, he was disappointed and he sought a way to end the relationship without disgracing Mary.

Joseph was willing to deal with his disappointment of thinking that Mary had been unfaithful, by quitting and moving in a different direction.

When life comes at us with its hurts, we too might be tempted to quit and move in a different direction.

Sometimes when life hurts us in such a big way, we can see past the hurt and disappointment we feel to get to a different alternative. Has that ever happened to you? Have you ever had bone crunching disappointments come your way? How did you work through them? What did you learn from them?

I am learning that one of the most helpful ways to deal with disappointments in life is to face them honestly. As I deal with the death of my daughter Whitney from this past summer, I find that I often hold in tension so many different emotions.

I have a great love for her. I miss her so much. I find that I celebrate the memories that come to me about her. I am filled with a sadness that cannot even be described. I am filled with anger over her tragic death that sometimes just gets the best of me.

I have, with the help of a gifted counselor and a lot of writing in my journals, been trying to figure out how to befriend these many feelings of hurt, disappointment, anger and sadness, so that I can

function at least reasonably well. I am learning. I just don't know how to give voice to what I am always learning.

But I know this. In the honesty of looking at my feelings and disappointments, I am discovering what Joseph discovered when he chose to face his feelings honestly. He discovered that God came to him to offer him hope for a future.

God came in a dream and said, "Joseph, don't hesitate to get married. Mary's pregnancy is of God. God is behind this. God did this. She will bring a son to birth and when she does, you will name him Jesus - which means God saves—he will save his people from their sins. This will fulfill a prophesy that the entire world has been waiting for. It will show that God really is with us."

And Joseph awoke. And his actions showed his trust of God.

If you and I are going to find the hope we are looking for in life, we can actually learn from Joseph. We can place our hope, our trust in the God who comes to us, in the God who loves us, in the God who cares enough about us to not abandon us when we get disappointed.

In all honesty, we will be disappointed in life. If we are not careful those disappointments can pull us away from God.

But if we face them honestly, if we face them with the belief that God still cares about us, we will discover that God will help us face them and move through them. It is happening in my life right now.

When we face our fears, when we turn to God, even when life feels overwhelming, this scripture reminds us that God will be there for us and not abandon us.

I am reminded of that old, old story of a man who was caught in a flood. He prayed, "Lord, save me." The waters of the flood arose higher and higher. He went up on top of the roof of his house and he continued to pray, "Lord, save me."

After a while a neighbor in a boat came by and said, "Friend, get in the boat, we are going to safety." The man simply responded by saying, "No thanks, God will save me."

He continued to pray, "Lord, save me." When a rescue boat came by and said, "Come on and get in our boat, we will take you to safety." The man said, "No thanks, not right now. God will save me."

Well the floodwaters arose and overwhelmed the house and the man died in the flood. When he went to heaven and appeared before God he said, "God, why didn't you save. I had placed my hope and my trust in you, and you let me down. Why didn't you save me?"

And God replied, "I sent several boats to save you, why didn't you get in?"

That man missed the presence of God in another. Don't let that happen to you.

If you are feeling as if life is overwhelming for you right now, if the unexpected has occurred and you are in full panic mode. Just stop a moment. Take a breath. Turn to God. Face your fears. And open your eyes to how God wants to help you through this storm.

May God help us all, to wake up to the presence of God.

Amen