

Sand Castles

by Julie Hughes 2007

I dreamed a dream.

Puffy clouds are floating in a blue sky.

It is a lovely day for building sand castles.

Several boys and girls are playing on the seashore.

They are building their favorite version of the perfect sand castle.

They all have in their minds as to how it should look for they all have studied the blueprint by the expert sand castle builder who is also the king.

As the day wears on, the castle begins to take shape and toy soldiers are brought out and placed in the castle.

Now something disturbing is happening, the clouds are turning gray and are threatening rain.

The kids start getting nervous trying to finish building the castle before the sky turns dark.

They know that the expert builder is coming to inspect the castle and they want to get it just right.

Just then one of the bigger boys begins to argue with another.

There is a squabble about how things should be done.

Power and control becomes an issue and the other children are confused and uneasy.

One decides to start building his own castle and a few agree with him and hurriedly begin to dig a moat right next to the first.

A few others start their own project and now there are three and then four castles being built.

They all want to get it right.

Soon bragging begins over who has the biggest castle and a struggle takes place over who gets the most toy soldiers.

Each feels he should have the most, because his castle is the most worthy.

Each feels he must define his own castle and have his own domain.

Then begins a disturbance in the sand.

The people in the castles come out and begin to compare and compete with one another.

The contest becomes rivalry, the rivalry becomes all out battle with toy soldiers struggling in the sand.

Some of the castles are destroyed and some of the figurines are lost.

Some are hidden in the ground and some are lying there unused.

What is happening?

Where is the lovely day?

It begins to rain.

Suddenly, the Expert Builder is at the edge of the clearing and coming toward the builders!

The children stand upright, stunned.

They are caught in their action.

They have not finished the castle!

In fact their castles are in disarray and toy soldiers are scattered all around.

Quickly they look back at their project.

They can't believe their eyes!

For right under their noses, the scene has changed.

Instantly, the scene is no longer make-believe!

It is **real!**

In a moment, the toy soldiers have become real men, women and children.

Some are proudly standing tall, feeling victorious they have won, but most are lying on the ground sick, beaten up or lost in the sand.

The ones hurting the most are the women and children.

The weak ones are scattered on the ground moaning for someone to take notice and show compassion.

The castles are suddenly churches where the work of the Expert Builder was supposed to take place.

And the children look down at their hands to realize they are the leaders of the entire operation.

They had been entrusted over this piece of land to bring order and peace.

To bring *His* Kingdom.

What will the Expert Builder say?

What can be done?

How can restoration come?

The rest of the story depends on us.

Church leadership is a serious responsibility.

The Lord is coming soon and his reward is with him.

He is now evaluating and adjusting the house of God so that many more can be saved and come into the kingdom of God.

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