

The Romance of the Doctor's Visits

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THE PAPER CARRIER MADE A DISCOVERY

A young lad who had passed the fifteenth milestone of life's journey by only a few months, sought to work his way through school by means of carrying the daily newspaper. On the particular day of this story's inception, the young fellow, after covering his route and eating his supper, proceeded to the yard and began to cut the grass with the law-mower.

The evening was perfect in its setting -- the weather being warm -- and was typical of those proverbial June days when the fragrance of Spring permeates the air. While the lad's mother sat in the front yard sewing in the twilight, an elderly gentleman drove along the street with a horse and surrey and called to the mother, "Would you not like to attend a Gospel service tonight which is being held in a tent on Flint Street? Perhaps your son would like to go with you. I will take you there and bring you back in my buggy."

Of course, the lad was none too eager to cut the grass, and grasped at the opportunity of having a "night out" in this novel fashion. Upon learning of the boy's desire to go, the mother agreed to accompany the neighbor and both prepared for the trip, eager to hear the Gospel.

The father of this young man was a preacher of the old school. His had been a very fruitful ministry in the states of Indiana and Ohio. In his home life, he had sought to make known the Gospel to the children and always insisted that they attend Sunday school and church services. However, none of this ministry had been the means of reaching the heart of the newsboy. He attended the services regularly, boasted in his belief of the Bible from cover to cover, and loved to hear it taught.

The life of Lewis -- the subject of this story -- was not exemplary. Often he merited and received severe discipline in his home, because of an uncontrolled temper and much selfishness. At the church, he was quite religious, taking the place of an outstanding Christian among the young people. His life before the public was more or less attractive, many friends being won by his amiable character and willingness to serve. But in the home and in his private life, Satan seemed to rule. Many evil habits gripped his heart and controlled his life, when not directly in the public eye.

The lad experienced times of deep anxiety of heart, because of the bondage which these sins frequently caused. On certain occasions, he would pray at the bedside for such a length of time that his brother would shake him, trying to arouse him from a supposed sleep. He would strive to drown the memory of his sins by reading the Bible at some length. On those days when sin particularly annoyed him and had the victory over him, he would take part of his savings and

present them as an extra offering to the Lord in the church fund. He had a different price for different sins. When certain sins were committed, he would contribute to the church an extra 15 cents. Other sins seemed more terrible, and for them he would give 25 cents extra to the cause of the Lord. Such was the darkness of the lad's heart, even though raised in a preacher's family and in the church environment.

Upon one occasion, as a punishment for much disobedience, Lewis' mother made him polish the stove in the sitting room. While thus seated on the floor, engaged in polishing the base of the stove, his father, the minister, passed through the room and remarked: "Lewis, you profess to be a Christian; you make more of a pretense at it than any of the other boys; but in spite of this, you seem to be the worst of them all. I wish you were a real, true Christian."

This statement pierced the boy's heart like a sword. He, too, had earnestly desired to be a real Christian. He felt that there was something in Christianity he did not possess, and yet he was ignorant of the fact that a greater blessing was available than that which he had already claimed.

While in this frame of mind, the youthful paper carrier gladly accepted the invitation to accompany his mother and the neighbor to the place where he would hear something that might clear up the darkness of his heart, and thus relieve the distress of his soul. Arriving at the tent where the meetings convened, they found about two hundred people congregated to listen to the speakers -- two Scotchmen, who expounded the Scriptures and explained the passages as Lewis had never heard them before. The text for the evening was Romans 4:5 -- "**To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.**" This was a new truth to Lewis -- one he had never heard before, and as the speakers unfolded the passage, it was quite apparent that the lad's heart was deeply touched.

Returning home, the mother and son reviewed the sermon together. "I do not believe that there is any verse like that in my Bible, mother," he said. "I never heard of anyone being forgiven without his working for it. Let us get our Bibles, mother, and see if they read like his."

Obtaining them, they found that the verse read just the same in their Bibles as it read in the one which the preacher used. Lewis then retired to his room to get the lessons for the day following, for he was a sophomore in the C-- High School.

There was not much rest for the lad that night, for the preacher had emphasized the word "not" in the text and it was impressed deeply on his heart. The HOLY SPIRIT was working, showing the boy that all of his efforts to be good were of no avail in the salvation of his soul.

The following evening, the Christian neighbor drove by again with another invitation for them to hear the Scotch preachers, and found the mother and son quite ready to attend the service. The text that evening was taken from Ephesians 2:8-9. The messenger stressed again the word "not" as he read, clearly and distinctly: "**Not of works, lest any man should boast.**" He explained how impossible it is for a guilty sinner to clear himself of his wickedness. He described also the foolishness of the man, who being condemned and in the cell, sought by good works and good intentions to remove his condemnation, and thus to clear the records of his sinful deeds.

Again, the lad and his mother returned home to consider with profound amazement this

remarkable passage and the explanation given by the minister. More and more, Lewis saw that his religious performances had no weight with GOD. He well remembered that through his four or five years' experience in his religious exercises, no good had been accomplished and no light had entered his soul. Frequently, he had been tempted to throw the whole business overboard and live out-and-out for the devil. The fear of future judgment and punishment were the only restraining forces which prevented his giving himself over completely to the world and turning his back on that which gave him no peace and answered none of his heart cries and yearnings.

The following night, they again attended the meeting in the tent, to hear for the third time a message on the same subject, but taken from Titus 3:5 -- "**Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost.**" That word "not" again presented itself vividly to the mind of Lewis, as he listened to the fervent, earnest message of the Scotchman. It rang in his ears and sank into his soul: "**Not by works of righteousness**"; "**Not by works of righteousness**"; "**Not by works of righteousness which we (I) have done.**" His soul was in a turmoil. Formerly, he believed that the works of righteousness done in the Sunday school and in the young people's society were meritorious, and surely would be the means of obtaining favor with GOD. Being active in the church, he was frequently asked to put on a "clown" act in some show for the church, or to solicit money for the church debt.

The three Scriptures used in the three messages which he had heard, convinced Lewis that all of his religious activities left him as a lost sinner, without GOD and without hope. As the fourth night rolled around, Lewis was again found at the tent listening intently to a message from Isaiah 64:6 -- "**All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.**" That sermon completely removed every vestige of hope that remained in his heart. All of his hopes for eternity were based on his religious and righteous acts. If his works of righteousness were as filthy rags in GOD's sight, what must his sins be like? If the best that he had done was only an abomination to GOD, what must the Lord think of his sins? These thoughts occupied his mind and soul. He was at his wits end. He saw that what he possessed was rejected by the Lord, but he did not yet see that all he needed could be found in CHRIST.

The special meetings came to an end and Lewis was not yet saved. He disputed in his mind with the truth that he had learned and stubbornly refused to acknowledge that he was as bad as the preacher indicated. He would not take the place of being utterly lost, but rather thought there might be some development in his character which would enable him to be worthy of Heaven. Thus the summer passed, but the impressions received at the tent remained.

Another meeting was announced for December, and Lewis planned to attend. The first service was held on Sunday night. The messenger's text was John 3:16. For the first time, it became clear to the young man that CHRIST JESUS is the Saviour; He must do all of the saving. We cannot help Him nor add to the value of either His person or His work by our religious activities. The message made a deep impression on the heart of Lewis, and he left the building determined to have the matter settled that night.

During the four-mile walk home after the meeting, our young friend found plenty of time for meditation. Having reached the corner where two main highways met, he found a bench, seated himself, and pondered over the decision which he knew he must make. Would he take CHRIST

and receive eternal life, or would he go on with the world in his sins and still rely upon a smattering of religion to sweeten the path? As he thus meditated over the possibilities, the HOLY SPIRIT brought to his mind Colossians 2:14 -- **"Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross."**

For the first time, the truth that CHRIST JESUS had borne his sins on Calvary was revealed to the heart of this seeking sinner. The blessed, watchful SPIRIT also brought to his mind the verse of a hymn, which Lewis repeated aloud to himself:

"Payment GOD will not twice demand,
First at my bleeding Surety's hand,
And then again at mine."

Rising to his feet, Lewis turned his gaze to the starry heavens, saying: "Lord JESUS, I will take you, I believe you did bear my sins on Calvary, and that you blotted them out. I thank you that my sins are gone and that you are my own Saviour." The burden rolled away, and Lewis now belonged to the Lord JESUS CHRIST. With a light heart and a buoyant step, the homeward journey was resumed.

May the telling of this story encourage many another young man to come to the Lord JESUS CHRIST for salvation. As you trust in the Saviour who is at the right hand of GOD, He will be the Lord of your life and the REDEEMER of your soul.
