

Chapter 17

God Had Our Address

I will never forget the picture as I stood in the doorway of what was known as the Bethesda Tabernacle that Sunday in 1934. Here in the barren little building, whose only virtue was cleanliness stood the people who had come to the service. They were standing in groups - two and three here, two and three there. In subdued voices they were asking questions and wondering what the day would bring.

As we entered, a silence fell. I know now they were all feeling sorry for me and wondering with what mixed emotions I must have come to this service. I knew I must set an example of courage and determination, and as best I could without even chairs to sit upon, I began to arrange the group for teaching.

At this very moment, there was a commotion at the doorway. To my amazement I found some people unloading folding chairs from the trunk of a car in front of the building. The Lord had spoken to the pastor of the United Brethren Church on St. Cyril Avenue. He had sent us a dozen and half folding chairs, not new but serviceable, and a similar number of used song books which we could have until we could acquire some of our own to replace them.

You can imagine what a feeling came over me as I saw again how God was mindful of our problems. He knew we had opened the work. He had our address, and He was still able to talk to His children. The Scripture came to my heart:

“Give and it shall be given back to you. Pressed down, shaken together and overflowing shall God cause men to give to your bosom.” (*Luke 6:38*)

We learn that God does not work apart from men, but He is able to employ men and all creation to bring about His will. Feeling very wealthy, we began graciously to appoint people to chairs and to supply them with a song book. Perhaps worn-out chairs and worn-out song books would not seem a token of prosperity to others, but to me, it seemed as though God had poured the wealth of Heaven into my lap.

We were able to proceed with the teaching with firm confidence and the assurance that a good start had been made toward the success of the work.

* * *

God sent us very poor people in those early days. I always felt it was a mark of God's confidence and love that He would entrust to me His poor. The Scripture, "He has made the poor of this world rich in faith"⁷ has been proven over and over again to me. Since then, the Lord has sent people of means, education, and refinement, and I have thanked Him for all of them. But there is a secret in my heart between God and me concerning the trial of my faith that was made possible by giving to me at the beginning those whom I was called upon to help and minister to, rather than those who would minister to me. For Jesus said:

"I came not to be ministered to, but to minister and to give My life as a ransom for many." (*Matt. 20:28*)

During this first service, among those who attended was a woman of another faith. This woman was an alcoholic, and her family had suffered much because of her periods of prolonged intoxication. At the close of the service, she was saved and delivered, and her family who came with her was also saved.

We felt God was giving us a glimpse into the type of ministry to which He had called us. Even as Jesus was appointed "to set captives free, to open the prison doors, to set at liberty those who were bound and to bind up the broken-hearted,"⁸ even so we knew too, that was the reason God has anointed us. Our work during those early days was mainly among the destitute, the afflicted, the lost and confused, and never was work more rewarding in God's grace.

In the beginning our thought had been merely to have a Sunday School for the neighborhood children and our own, and perhaps to have one day of the week set aside for prayer and sewing for the poor. However, the Sunday School was prolonged into a teaching and preaching service for the glory of the Lord. The blessing of His presence was so deeply felt that we were loath to leave afterwards. So

⁷ James 2:5

⁸ Luke 4:18

very soon, we were having a morning service and evening evangelistic service. At all the meetings souls were saved, and the work was growing under the blessing and the *Hand* of the Lord.

* * *

This was during the time of the Depression, so we appointed Thursday as our day of fasting and sewing for the poor. We called our little group the “Dorcas Group.”⁹ We would invite neighboring woman and friends to come and help us ready the garments. Those were such happy days. Our whole conversation during the time of sewing was on the wonderment of His goodness and mercy. Every garment prepared by the group was prayed over before it went out. We would ask the Lord that anyone receiving this garment would find Him as their personal Savior. It was definitely a work of faith, and it brought the results that only faith in God is able to produce. We were able to clothe and help feed many families who were feeling the pinch of these Depression days. We were able to lead many to the Lord. Many were the lost sheep brought back again into the Lord’s fold.

* * *

The thought of any remuneration for the work at the church had not at this time even entered my mind, even had there been any church income to allow it. The offerings for the whole day on Sunday would average only a few dollars. With this we managed to save toward the rent of the building and the few indispensable little necessities as we went along. But I was so happy to be of service to the Lord, so thankful almost to the point of awe at the thought that God would condescend to use me in any small capacity, that the idea of compensation never even crossed my mind. As I look back to the hardships of those first years, I realize that the love and desire to serve God made what were real sacrifices seem like nothing.

When finally the situation got out of hand, and I was spending virtually all my time on the work and had to have remuneration to

⁹Dorcas is documented in the Book of Acts as a believer who had a heart for those in need. She sewed garments and ministered to the poor with her charity. (JHG)

continue, I remember well my first pay was five dollars a month. At that time, I felt almost guilty in accepting it and would not have done so had not the situation become dire. Not having the wherewithal even for car fare, our visitations to the poor, sick, and needy took us many miles on foot in all sorts of weather. I remember how many times in the day on one of these trips, I would have to change the cardboards that I had placed in my shoes to replace the soles that were worn through or missing. However, there was no thought of feeling sorry for myself. There was such a happy urge of love that seemed to surge through me constantly. To be of service to my lovely Lord and to the needs of humanity made personal need and inconvenience seem unimportant. And I remembered constantly that;

“He will not test us beyond what we are able; but will with the temptation make a way of escape that we may be able to bear it.” (*1 Cor. 10:13*)

And, God was again about to reveal His faithfulness.