

Gospel Gazette

Salt Lake City Mission, P.O. Box 142, Salt Lake City, UT 84110 - Phone 801-355-6310

February 2011

Growing By Grace

Billy Cockerham

When I was a child, my parents would take me and my siblings to church on Sundays but they themselves would not attend. There were pictures on the wall of Jesus' journey to the cross and I guess I heard about Jesus but I don't remember being impacted by what I heard.



One day the janitor at our high school told me about Jesus and what His death on the cross was about. He made it personal to me and I remember being stunned by the news. I made my way to the desert, behind the cemetery in my town and knelt down in a big hole in the ground, prayed and accepted Jesus as my personal Savior. I felt a weight lift off my shoulders but I didn't know what it all meant. Years later I started reading the bible and couldn't get enough. Things were good for a while.

As time went on, I never got into a bible teaching church because I was critical of them all. Slowly but surely I stopped reading the Word of God and slid into drinking and partying and just living any old way I wanted to. The whole time I felt the Lord wooing me back to Himself. I would get into trouble time and again, finding myself locked up. It was there the Lord would get my attention again and draw me to Himself.

Alcohol had been a problem for me throughout the years. Why the Lord puts up with me is evidence of His loving kindness and patience with me. I wouldn't put up with someone like myself but God is so much greater than me and I am very thankful.

God has, time and again, shown himself powerful on my behalf and delivered me from sinful habits. Even placing me in the ministry to share his goodness with others. Once more I got away from God's Word and fellowshiping with His people and ended up in Salt Lake City. I believe the Lord has me here at the Salt Lake City Mission for a reason but I'm not exactly sure what it is yet.

I thank God He has this ministry available for men like me because I realize how important the Word of God is and how vital it is for believers to support and encourage each other. I was never really discipled in the importance of the Word of God and fellowship when I first got saved. At the Mission this is top priority and exactly what I need to get and stay strong in the Lord.

Martin Avdeitch

At about age fifty, Russian novelist Leo Tolstoy developed a profound interest in spiritual things and began studying the Gospels in earnest. Unfortunately, he rejected more than he accepted, repudiating belief in miracles, the deity of Christ, the personality of God, and the plan of salvation. Tolstoy reduced Christianity to little more than charity and good works.

He nonetheless wrote about it beautifully, and nothing sums up his philosophy better than this story which Tolstoy based on one of his favorite passages, Matthew 25:31-40:

One night Martin Avdeitch, a humble shoemaker, dozing over his open Bible, suddenly seemed to hear a voice saying, "Martin! Look thou into the street tomorrow, for I am coming to visit thee." Convinced the Lord Jesus was going to visit him, Martin awoke the next morning with nervous excitement. But no one showed up that day except a succession of penniless and pitiful souls: an aged veteran, a shivering mother and newborn, an old peddler woman and a frightened boy who had filched one of her apples.

With a kind heart, Martin cared for each person, but as evening fell, he was disappointed that Jesus had not visited that day. Putting on his spectacles, he took up his Bible with a sigh, and it opened to Matthew 25. Martin read: "For I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in."

"Lord, when did we do these things?"

Looking on down the page, Martin read: "Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me."

Then Avdeitch understood that the vision had come true, and that his Savior had in very truth visited him that day, and that he had received Him.

The Person You Want Others to Be

“Therefore all things *whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.*” **Matthew 7:12 KJV**

In Other Words

Treat others the way you want them to treat you first. This fulfills the teachings from both the Law and the Prophets.

Small Bites

- ✓ Reflect the person you want others to be
- ✓ Positive actions reap positive responses
- ✓ Reactive repairs, cut proactive builds
- ✓ Foul features failure; but fair fosters fair
- ✓ Hate ricochets. Respect is earned
- ✓ Supportiveness generates support
- ✓ Degradation destroys; but praise empowers
- ✓ Do first, expect last
- ✓ Shower unwarranted kindness upon many before
- ✓ daring to expect help from a few
- ✓ A loving kindness virus would make a lot of us feel better
- ✓ Be who you demand others to be

Questions and Thoughts to Aid Digestion

How do you treat God?

How do you want God to treat you?

Explain the differences in these two admonitions: **Do unto others** before they do unto you. **Do to others as you want then to do to you.**

What do you do to others that you hope will never be done to you?

What is the difference between doing no harm and doing good?

Do you give your family the respect you want from them?

What is one thing you want most from others?

What would the world be like if we all treated each other the way you want others to treat you?

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, help me to take the initiative in acts of love and compassion rather than waiting for someone else to make the first move. In Jesus Name Amen.

On Having the Will

More people make charitable contributions while they are living rather than later through their wills. The truth is, most people never get around to making a will. They die, as lawyers say, “in testate.”

What is there about a will that puts people off? Why do so many of us seem to lack the will to make a will? For one thing, it’s inconvenient to find a good attorney, make the appointment, and spend time and money going through the process of gathering information and making decisions. It’s much easier to put it off.

A second reason is the dread some feel in contemplating their own death or the death of their spouse. Their will is something they plan to do later. It’s always later, and often never gets done.

Another reason for postponing action may relate to the difficulty of dividing up your estate if family conflicts exist, or when unsure how wisely the inherited assets will be used.

Still others lack the will to have a will because they consider their net worth does not merit such a difficult personal task. They think they have too few assets to bother with a will or may assume that everything will go automatically and equally to all members of the family. They do not understand the benefits of a will, not only in settling their estates according to their wishes, but in making their departure easier for their loved ones left behind.

Whatever the reason, making a will takes will power. It requires not only choices but also action.

Salt Lake City Mission can help you create or update your will. To learn more about this service, please visit www.slcmlegacy.org/pg. We do hope that you will take advantage of this service, and let us offer a blessing to you and your family.

Someone Once Said ...

- *Kindness: Love in Action.*—Charles Allen
- *I expect to pass through life but once. If therefore, there be any kindness I can show, or any good thing I can do to any fellow-being, let me do it now, and not defer or neglect it, as I shall not pass this way again.*—William Penn
- *He who sows courtesy reaps friendship, and he who plants kindness gathers love.*—Saint Basil (A.D. 330–379)
- *The nicest thing we can do for our Heavenly Father is to be kind to one of his children.*—St. Teresa of Avila