

.t.is my Shepherd

The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want.



BOISE, IDAHO

NOVEMBER, 2007

VOL. 4 NO. 4

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HIS MYSTERIOUS WAYS

You've really done it this time, Dorothy," I said to myself, hauling yet another 20-pound bag of Idaho's out to my car. My Mustang was chock-full of spuds; the bags were stacked shoulder-high in the front and back, and stuffed in the trunk.

I settled into the driver's seat, removing a renegade potato wedged beneath the parking brake. I was in my first year as outreach leader for the women's circle at our church, and I liked to think that what I lacked in experience I made up for in enthusiasm. Instead of just donating money like we had in past years, I wanted to organize at least one project each month. When a friend mentioned how her husband would always get an extra bag of potatoes at the grocery store to drop off at a shelter, it really got me going. I organized a potato drive and it turned out to be one of our most successful projects ever. Problem was, I hadn't thought about what we would do with all the spuds. I imagined my self-driving around town for days on end with a car full of rotting potatoes.

Then I remembered a shelter near my house. I could get rid of at least a few bags there, and maybe get some more leads.

When I knocked on the door, a frazzled looking woman answered. "*I don't know if you need food donations...*" I began.

"*We sure do!*" she cut in. "*The cook from our soup kitchen just came to me, frantic. He was getting ready to fix today's meal when he discovered our order didn't get delivered. The pantry is practically bare.*" She glanced at her watch anxiously. "*In just a couple of hours, there will be more than fifty hungry people expecting a meal, and we have nothing to feed them. We'll take anything. What do you have?*"

"*Well actually a lot of potatoes.*" I said

She stared at me. "*Do you know what's on the meal schedule for today?*" she asked. "*Potato soup!*"

Dorothy Kennett

Bloomington, Illinois

Guideposts 2000

REFLECTIONS BROKEN BRANCHES

By Stan Manley
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It was Wednesday evening, prayer meeting had just concluded. People were standing outside enjoying the conversation of friends looking for children and making an effort to head for home. Nothing unusual about the scene but something was about to happen that I was privileged to witness, not only visually but also spiritually. It would appear to be an insignificant occurrence at first but would have a lasting impact on me.

The scene begins to unfold with some children playing on a bench that encloses a beautiful flowering fruit tree. At one point the playing included a little girl reaching out and swinging on a branch of the small tree. The branch broke and the little girl, along with the branch full of beautiful blossoms, fell to the ground.

Almost immediately an adult who had anticipated what was going to happen hurried toward the group of children, scolding them as she went. As they parted to let her through, I saw for the first time the little girl.

She was not hurt, but on her face was the look of embarrassment and humiliation. As one finger found its way to her mouth, she began nervously pulling on her lower lip. She received another warning; while at her feet lay the beautiful branch full of blossoms, damaged beyond repair. It was then that it happened, it is still fresh in my mind and the impression forever in my heart.

A young man emerged from one of the small groups of adults and approached the circle of children and the little girl, still standing at the foot of the tree with the look of hurt on her face.

He reached down and picked up the broken branch and began to remove the (Cont.)

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(CONTINUED) smaller branches and twigs and after collecting a handful presented the little girl with a beautiful bouquet of blossoms, buds and leaves. As she reached out to accept the gift, a beautiful smile broke across her face and warmth filled my spirit.

I watched as the young man proceeded to give bouquets to all the other children from the broken branch. The courtyard was soon filled with children running to their parents, playing and clinging to their beautiful bouquets of flowers.

My thoughts quickly went to the broken branches in my life and how so many times Jesus came and out of the embarrassment and hurt, presented me with a beautiful bouquet. Not condoning the deed but influencing the circumstances to effect the results so that I may enjoy His glory.

Out of the struggles of life, if they are committed to Him, there is no failure in defeat or glory in victory but only service to the King. Release to Him today, all of your broken branches and receive His beautiful bouquet.

Stan Manley-Editor

I BELIEVE IN MIRACLES

I believe in miracles;
They happen every day.
If we but look more closely,
They're just a breath away.
One needn't be a poet
To see each new surprise.
Greater things can happen yet,
More that we surmise.
I used to be a cynic.
I couldn't really see,
Until my eyes were opened
To the miracles of thee.

Diane D. Lake

**MISSION STATEMENT:
TO ENCOURAGE THE FAITHFUL
TO SAVE THE LOST**



**FOR GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD
THAT HE GAVE HIS ONE AND ONLY
SON, THAT WHOSOEVER BELIEVES
IN HIM SHALL NOT PERISH BUT HAVE
ETERNAL LIFE. JOHN 3:16**



IT'S YOUR RESPONSIBILITY, DO IT TODAY.

AT RETREAT

"Call unto me, and I will answer you, and I will tell you great and mighty things, which you do not know." Jeremiah 33:3

At the church retreat at Camp Good News, Pastor Ed Libby, guest speaker, taught from the three parables in Luke 15, the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the prodigal son. He asked us to see how the parables related to our lives. I wasn't making a connection except Jesus goes after the one lost sheep (which He has done many times with me.)

When we read the parable in our small group, the verse in Luke 15:5 jumped out at me, "**And when the Shepherd found the sheep, He laid it on his shoulders.**" I didn't remember ever reading that verse. After the small groups came back together again, Pastor Libby brought up that verse in particular. I thought that was quite a coincidence.

In closing, pastor Mike told us that during our quiet time Saturday morning, to again read the parable of the lost sheep and think about how it related to us. This is what came to me within a five-minute time span.

1. I could get a better view.
2. I would be up away from the mainstream of life.
3. I could draw warmth from the Lord's body.
4. I received rest.
5. It would be a smoother ride than walking on a rough surface.
6. I could feel His heartbeat.
7. I was closer to His voice and could hear better.
8. I had the security of him holding on to me.
9. He would keep me on the right path.

Wanda Blair
Meridian, Idaho