

†.my Shepherd

The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want.



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REFLECTIONS

By Stan Manley

...my Shepherd editor

Peace That Passeth

All Understanding

Let me take you to a suburb of Los Angeles California, where I worked the night shift as a gas station attendant, as I took a semester off from college.

At about 2:00 in the morning, I was finishing a sandwich when I noticed a figure approach the office from the east side. I got up just in time to meet him at the door. But, before I could ask if I could help him, he had pulled a gun from his jacket, forcing me back into the small office.

He abruptly demanded my money, which I gave to him even more quickly than he had commanded. We were about the same size, but the gun made him about six inches taller and 25 pounds heavier. I immediately dismissed any thoughts of heroism or stupidity.

He ordered me to open the cash register. I quickly explained that it was not functional during the night shift. This tended to upset him. He grabbed a tire iron and began to beat the cash register with one hand, while the hand with the gun was flailing wildly in the air.

I tensed up, thinking he might start taking his anger out on me. He suddenly turned and, pushing the gun into my midsection, he directed me to head for the back room that was just off the office. The thought suddenly came to me that this scene was about to come to an end, and it could be a violent one.

I felt the barrel of the gun press into the small of my back. I reassured myself that it was obvious he was going to have me lay down on the floor and then make his escape. (Cont.)

HIS MYSTERIOUS WAYS

By the summer of 1977, my heavy drinking had taken its toll. I was alone, and the only creature in the world that I cared about was my Burmese cat, Chocolate Mousse. One July day I had locked myself out of my apartment. The neighbor who helped me get in not only dried my boozy tears, but went on to tell me how his own life as an alcoholic had been filled with such blunders, and tragedy as well. When he finished, I agreed to go with him on Saturday to get help.

By Friday night, though, I had decided not to go. As I sat down for a typical evening of bourbon, and TV, I began to watch the film Days of Wine and Roses. It was the story of a marriage between alcoholics, played by Jack Lemmon and Lee Remick. In one scene, Jack Klugman, who plays a recovering alcoholic, told Lemmon what would happen if he kept drinking. Klugman slammed his fist on a table and yelled, "Nothing will have any meaning for you anymore—nothing, NOTHING!"

At that point I had a terrible flashback of when, in a drunken rage, a friend had picked up her beloved puppy and hurled him across the room. I looked at my cat. I became afraid that I might even hurt Mousse. I knew then I had to accept my neighbor's offer.

I did, and by the grace of God I've been sober for 12 years. Not long ago I watched that film again, and I waited for the all-important scene between Klugman and Lemmon. This time, though, there was just conversation, one man explaining alcoholic progression to another. No banging on tables, no one shouting, "Nothing will have any meaning for you anymore." The words that changed my life had never been spoken.

Emjay Paquet

New Braintree, Massachusetts-Guideposts October 1989

my shepherd is not affiliated with any church or religious belief.

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(Cont.) These plans ended however when he forced me face to face with the wall, with no room left to lie down. Standing there, feeling the gun pressed even harder into my back, something unusual happened inside the pit of my stomach. I knew that at any second he was going to pull the trigger and life would end.

However, the fear, a paralyzing fear that had occupied the pit of my stomach, was suddenly gone. A long time ago I had made the decision to invite Jesus into my life. There was no doubt that there were three persons in this room.

I said a quick prayer, closed my eyes and waited for the sound of the explosion. The moments stretched into eternity. I became aware of a peace that passed all understanding. There was no whimpering or pleading, just acceptance that my life was over, and it was time.

Finally, the thief told me to stay where I was and not to turn around. I could hear his footsteps backing out of the room, and then leaving the office. I waited until I heard a car take off before making my exit to call the police.

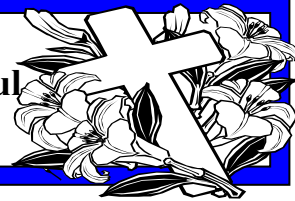
There have been several times that I have felt the breath of death on my life, but never the sting of death. In every situation there has been a calmness, a peace that does indeed passeth all understanding. It can be yours.

The Bible tells us that today is the day of salvation. Now is the time. Thinking that we can make peace with Jesus later is a terrible misjudgment on our part. You must remember that you are going to survive death. Your life will continue at that point until forever.

We have not been promised that we will all die peacefully in our sleep. For some of us, our lives could end in an instant of violence or any of a hundred different ways. Invite Him into your life, into your heart. Do it today, do it now. Please don't wait.

Stan Manley-editor

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 NIV

It's your responsibility, do it today



A PRAYER FOR OCTOBER

O God,
Early in the morning
I cry to You.
Help me to pray
And to concentrate
my thoughts on You:
I cannot do this alone.
In me there is darkness,
But with You there is light;
I am lonely,
but You do not leave me;
I am feeble in heart,
but with you there is help;
I am restless,
but with You there is peace.
In me there is bitterness,
But with You there is patience;
I do not understand Your ways,
But You know the way for me.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945)

German Lutheran pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer's fiery denunciations of Adolf Hitler's anti-Semitism led to his imprisonment in 1943. While there, he ministered to and held services for his fellow prisoners. He wrote this prayer just before his execution.

Recently heard: "Do you want to make a difference? Put Christ at the center of your life, love people, and God can use that to change eternities."