

Stories :)

Two Horses

Just up the road from my home is a field with two horses in it. From a distance, each looks like every other horse. But if you stop your car or are walking by, you will notice something quite amazing.

Looking into the eyes of one horse will disclose that he is blind. His owner has chosen not to have him put down but has made a good home for him. This alone is amazing.

If nearby and listening you will hear the sound of a bell. Looking around for the source of the sound you will see that it comes from the smaller horse in the field. Attached to her halter is a small bell. It lets her blind friend know where she is so he can follow her.

As you stand and watch these two friends, you'll see how she is always checking on him and that he will listen for her bell and then slowly walk to where she is, trusting that she will not lead him astray.

When she returns to the shelter of the barn each evening, she stops occasionally and looks back, making sure her friend isn't too far behind to hear the bell.

Like the owners of these two horses, God does not throw us away just because we are not perfect or because we have problems or challenges. He watches over us and even brings others into our lives to help us when we are in need.

Sometimes we are the blind horse being guided by the little ringing bell of those who God places in our lives. Other times we are the guide horse, helping others see.

Good friends are like this you don't always see them, but you know they are always there.

Please listen for my bell and I'll listen for yours.

"Be kinder than necessary, for everyone you meet is fighting some kind of battle."

Our lives are the only Bible some people will ever read.

The Old Cowboy

One morning an old cowboy entered a church just before services were to begin. Although the old man and his clothes were clean, he wore jeans, a denim shirt, and boots that were very worn and ragged. In his hand he carried a worn out old hat and an equally worn out Bible.

The church he entered was in a very upscale and exclusive part of the city. It was the largest and most beautiful church the old cowboy had ever seen. The people of the congregation were all dressed with expensive clothes and accessories.

As the cowboy took a seat, the others moved away from him. No one greeted, spoke to, or welcomed him. They were all appalled at his appearance and did not attempt to hide it.

As the old cowboy was leaving the church, the preacher approached him and asked the cowboy to do him a favor. "Before you come back in here again, have a talk with God and ask him what he thinks would be appropriate attire for worship." The old cowboy assured the preacher he would.

The next week, he showed back up for the services wearing the same ragged jeans, shirt, boots, and hat. Once again he was shunned and ignored. The preacher approached the man and said, "I thought I asked you to speak to God before you came back to our church."

"I did," replied the old cowboy.

"If you spoke to God, what did he tell you the proper attire should be for worshipping in here?" asked the preacher.

"Well, sir, God told me that He didn't have a clue what I should wear. He said He'd never been in this church before."

Attitude Is Everything

Michael is the kind of guy you love to hate. He is always in a good mood and always has something positive to say. When someone would ask him how he was doing, he would reply, "If I were any better, I would be twins!" He was a natural motivator.

If an employee was having a bad day, Michael was there telling the employee how to look on the positive side of the situation. Seeing this style really made me curious, so one day I went up to Michael and asked him, "I don't get it! You can't be a positive person all of the time. How do you do it?"

Michael replied, "Each morning I wake up and say to myself, you have two choices today. You can choose to be in a good mood or ... you can choose to be in a bad mood. I choose to be in a good mood." Each time something bad happens, I can choose to be a victim or...I can choose to learn from it. I choose to learn from it. Every time someone comes to me complaining, I can choose to accept their complaining or... I can point out the positive side of life. I choose the positive side of life.

"Yeah, right, it's not that easy," I protested. "Yes, it is," Michael said. "Life is all about choices. When you cut away all the junk, every situation is a choice. You choose how you react to situations. You choose how people affect your mood. You choose to be in a good mood or bad mood. The bottom line: It's your choice how you live your life."

I reflected on what Michael said. Soon thereafter, I left the Tower Industry to start my own business. We lost touch, but I often thought about him when I made a choice about life instead of reacting to it.

Several years later, I heard that Michael was involved in a serious accident, falling some 60 feet from a communications tower. After 18 hours of surgery and weeks of intensive care, Michael was released from the hospital with rods placed in his back.

I saw Michael about six months after the accident. When I asked him how he was, he replied, "If I were any better, I'd be twins Wanna see my scars?" I declined to see his wounds, but I did ask him what had gone through his mind as the accident took place.

"The first thing that went through my mind was the well-being of my soon-to-be born daughter," Michael replied. "Then, as I lay on the ground, I remembered that I had two choices: I could choose to live or...I could choose to die. I chose to live."

"Weren't you scared? Did you lose consciousness?" I asked. Michael continued, "...the paramedics were great. They kept telling me I was going to be fine. But when they wheeled me into the ER and I saw the expressions on the faces of the doctors and nurses, I got really scared. In their eyes, I read 'he's a dead man'. I knew I needed to take action."

"What did you do?" I asked. "Well, there was a big burly nurse shouting questions at me," said Michael. "She asked if I was allergic to anything. 'Yes, I replied.' The doctors and nurses stopped working as they waited for my reply. I took a deep breath and yelled, 'Gravity!'" Over their laughter, I told them, "I am choosing to live. Operate on me as if I am alive, not dead."

Michael lived, thanks to the skill of his doctors, but also because of his amazing attitude... I learned from him that every day we have the choice to live fully. Attitude, after all, is everything.

Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own." -- Matthew 6:34.

After all today is the tomorrow you worried about yesterday. Make wise choices.

The Missing Baby Jesus

It was the day after Christmas at a church in San Francisco. The pastor of the church was looking at the manger scene, and noticed that the baby Jesus figure was missing from the cradle.

He immediately turned and went outside and saw a little boy with a red wagon walking down the street -- in the wagon was the figure of the infant Jesus.

He walked up to the boy and said, "Son, where did you get that little baby Jesus that's in your wagon?"

The little boy replied, "I got him from the church."

"Why did you take him?", asked the pastor.

The little boy replied, "Well, about a week before Christmas, I prayed to the Lord Jesus. I told him that if he would bring me a red wagon for Christmas, I would give him a ride around the block in it."

Christmas Shopping and the Elevator

A woman was out Christmas shopping with her two children. After two hours of looking at row after row of toys and hearing them ask for everything they saw on those many shelves, she was feeling the overwhelming pressure that so many of us feel during the holiday season, and was relieved when she made it to the elevator.

When the elevator doors opened, there was already a crowd in the car. Determined, she pushed her way into the car and dragging her kids and packages. When the doors closed she couldn't take it anymore and stated, "Whoever started this whole Christmas thing should be found, strung up, and shot."

From the back of the elevator everyone heard a quiet calm voice respond, "Don't worry, we already crucified Him."

For the rest of the trip down, the elevator was so quiet you could have heard a pin drop.

The Wooden Bowl

-- by David Langerfeld

A frail old man went to live with his son, daughter-in-law, and four-year old grandson. The old man's hands trembled, his eyesight was blurred, and his step faltered.

The family ate together at the table. But the elderly grandfather's shaky hands and failing sight made eating difficult. Peas rolled off his spoon onto the floor. When he grasped the glass, milk spilled on the tablecloth.

The son and daughter-in-law became irritated with the mess. "We must do something about Grandfather," said the son. "I've had enough of his spilled milk, noisy eating, and food on the floor."

So the husband and wife set a small table in the corner. There, Grandfather ate alone while the rest of the family enjoyed dinner. Since Grandfather had broken a dish or two, his food was served in a wooden bowl.

When the family glanced in Grandfather's direction, sometime he had a tear in his eye as he sat alone. Still, the only words the couple had for him were sharp admonitions when he dropped a fork or spilled food.

The four-year-old watched it all in silence.

One evening before supper, the father noticed his son playing with wood scraps on the floor. He asked the child sweetly, "What are you making?"

The boy responded, "Oh, I am making a little bowl for you and Mama to eat your food from when I grow up." The four-year-old smiled and went back to work.

The words so struck the parents so that they were speechless. Then tears started to stream down their cheeks. Though no word was spoken, both knew what must be done.

That evening the husband took Grandfather's hand and gently led him back to the family table. For the remainder of his days he ate every meal with the family. And for some reason, neither husband nor wife seemed to care any longer when a fork was dropped, milk spilled, or the tablecloth was soiled.

The Hymnbook

-- by Arthur Bowler

I watched intently as my little brother was caught in the act. He sat in the corner of the living room, a pen in one hand and my father's hymnbook in the other. As my father walked into the room, my brother cowered slightly; he sensed that he had done something wrong. From a distance, I saw that he had opened my father's brand-new book and scribbled across the length and breadth of the entire first page with a pen. Now, staring at my father fearfully, he and I both waited for his punishment.

My father picked up his prized hymnal, looked at it carefully, and then sat down without saying a word. Books were precious to him; he was a clergyman and the holder of several degrees. For him, books were knowledge, and yet, he loved his children. What he did in the next few minutes was remarkable. Instead of punishing my brother, instead of scolding or yelling or reprimanding, he sat down, took the pen from my brother's hand and then wrote in the book himself, alongside the scribbles John had made: "John's word 1959, age two. How many times have I looked into your beautiful face and into your warm, alert eyes looking up at me and thanked God for the one who has now scribbled in my new hymnal? You have made the book sacred as have your brothers and sister to so much of my life."

Wow, I thought. This is punishment?

From time to time I take a book down - not just a cheesy paperback but a real book that I know I will have for many years to come - and I give it to one of my children to scribble or write their names in. And as I look at their artwork, I think about my father, and how he taught me about what really matters in life: people, not objects; tolerance, not judgment; love which is at the very heart of a family.

I think about these things, and I smile. And I whisper, "Thank you, Dad."

Pathfinders Escape

Pathfinders in Thailand were planning a camporee on the beach at Phucket, but as the time for the camporee approached, it was decided to move it to the mainland.

2000 pathfinders escaped harm because of this decision.

Shipwreck Prayers

-- author unknown

A voyaging ship was wrecked during a storm at sea and only two of the men on it were able to swim to a small, desert like island. The two survivors, not knowing what else to do, agreed that they had no other recourse but to pray to God. However, to find out whose prayer was more powerful, they agreed to divide the territory between them and stay on opposite sides of the island.

The first thing they prayed for was food. The next morning, the first man saw a fruit-bearing tree on his side of the land, and he was able to eat its fruit. The other man's parcel of land remained barren.

After a week, the first man was lonely and he decided to pray for a wife. The next day, another ship was wrecked, and the only survivor was a woman who swam to his side of the land. On the other side of the island, there was nothing.

Soon the first man prayed for a house, clothes, more food. The next day, all of these were given to him. However, the second man still had nothing.

Finally, the first man prayed for a ship, so that he and his wife could leave the island. In the morning, he found a ship docked at his side of the island. The first man boarded the ship with his wife and decided to leave the second man on the island. He considered the other man unworthy to receive God's blessings, since none of his prayers had been answered.

As the ship was about to leave, the first man heard a voice from Heaven booming, "Why are you leaving your companion on the island?"

"My blessings are mine alone, since I was the one who prayed for them," the first man answered. "His prayers were all unanswered and so he does not deserve anything."

"You are mistaken!" the voice rebuked him. "He had only one prayer, which I answered. If not for that, you would not have received any of my blessings."

"Tell me," the first man asked the voice, "What did he pray for that I should owe him anything?"

"He prayed that all your prayers be answered."

A Beautiful Flower in an Old Pail

-- author unknown

Our house was directly across the street from the clinic entrance of Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore. We lived downstairs and rented the upstairs rooms to out patients at the clinic.

One summer evening as I was fixing supper, there was a knock at the door. I opened it to see a truly awful looking man. "Why, he's hardly taller than my eight-year-old," I thought as I stared at the stooped, shriveled body. But the appalling thing was his face, lopsided from swelling, red and raw.

Yet his voice was pleasant as he said, "Good evening. I've come to see if you've a room for just one night. I came for a treatment this morning from the eastern shore, and there's no bus 'til morning." He told me he'd been hunting for a room since noon but with no success, no one seemed to have a room. "I guess it's my face... I know it looks terrible, but my doctor says with a few more treatments..."

For a moment I hesitated, but his next words convinced me: "I could sleep in this rocking chair on the porch. My bus leaves early in the morning." I told him we would find him a bed, but to rest on the porch. I went inside and finished getting supper.

When we were ready, I asked the old man if he would join us. "No thank you. I have plenty." And he held up a brown paper bag.

When I had finished the dishes, I went out on the porch to talk with him a few minutes. It didn't take a long time to see that this old man had an oversized heart crowded into that tiny body.

He told me he fished for a living to support his daughter, her five children, and her husband, who was hopelessly crippled from a back injury. He didn't tell it by way of complaint; in fact, every other sentence was preface with a thanks to God for a blessing. He was grateful that no pain accompanied his disease, which was apparently a form of skin cancer. He thanked God for giving him the strength to keep going.

At bedtime, we put a camp cot in the children's room for him. When I got up in the morning, the bed linens were neatly folded and the little man was out on the porch. He refused breakfast, but just before he left for his bus, haltingly, as if asking a great favor, he said, Could I please come back and stay the next time I have a treatment? I won't put you out a bit. I can sleep fine in a chair."

He paused a moment and then added, "Your children made me feel at home. Grownups are bothered by my face, but children don't seem to mind."

I told him he was welcome to come again. And on his next trip he arrived a little after seven in the morning. As a gift, he brought a big fish and a quart of the largest oysters I had ever seen. He said he had shucked them that morning before he left so that they'd be nice and fresh. I knew his bus left at 4:00 a.m. and I wondered what time he had to get up in order to do this for us.

In the years he came to stay overnight with us there was never a time that he did not bring us a gift like vegetables from his garden. Other times we received packages in the mail, always by special delivery: a box of fresh young spinach or kale, every leaf carefully washed. Knowing that he must walk three miles to mail these, and knowing how little money he had made the gifts doubly precious.

When I received these little remembrances, I often thought of a comment our next-door neighbor made after he left that first morning. "Did you keep that awful looking man last night? I turned him away! You can lose roomers by putting up such people!" Maybe we did lose roomers once or twice. But oh! If only they could have known him, perhaps their illness' would have been easier to bear.

I know our family always will be grateful to have known him. From him we learned what it is to accept the bad without complaint and the good with gratitude to God.

Recently I was visiting a friend who has a greenhouse, As she showed me her flowers, we came to the most beautiful one of all, a golden chrysanthemum, bursting with blooms. But to my great surprise, it was growing in an old dented, rusty bucket. I thought to myself, "If this were my plant, I'd put it in the loveliest container I had!"

My friend changed my mind. "I ran short of pots," she explained, "and knowing how beautiful this one would be, I thought it wouldn't mind starting out in this old pail. It's just for a little while, till I can put it out in the garden."

She must have wondered why I laughed so delightedly, but I was imagining just such a scene in heaven. "Here's an especially beautiful one," God may have said when he came to the soul of the sweet old fisherman. "He won't mind starting in this small body -- just for a little while."

**"Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."
-- I Samuel 16:76**

*This is an Uncle Arthur story. I think the title was
"I Can Sleep on Windy Nights" from Uncle Arthur's Online.*

Years ago, a farmer owned land along the Atlantic seacoast. He constantly advertised for hired hands. Most people were reluctant to work on farms along the Atlantic. They dreaded the awful storms that raged across the Atlantic, wreaking havoc on the buildings and crops.

As the farmer interviewed applicants for the job, he received a steady stream of refusals.

Finally, a short, thin man, well past middle age, approached the farmer. "Are you a good farm hand?" the farmer asked him.

"Well, I can sleep when the wind blows," answered the little man.

Although puzzled by this answer, the farmer, desperate for help, hired him. The little man worked well around the farm, busy from dawn to dusk, and the farmer felt satisfied with the man's work. Then one night the wind howled loudly in from offshore.

Jumping out of bed, the farmer grabbed a lantern and rushed next door to the hired hand's sleeping quarters. He shook the little man and yelled, "Get up! A storm is coming! Tie things down before they blow away!"

The little man rolled over in bed and said firmly, "No sir. I told you, I can sleep when the wind blows."

Enraged by the response, the farmer was tempted to fire him on the spot. Instead, he hurried outside to prepare for the storm. To his amazement, he discovered that all of the haystacks had been covered with tarpaulins. The cows were in the barn, the chickens were in the coops, and the doors were barred.

The shutters were tightly secured. Everything was tied down. Nothing could blow away. The farmer then understood what his hired hand meant, so he returned to his bed to also sleep while the wind blew.

It's Just A Quarter

Several years ago a preacher moved to Houston, Texas. Some weeks after he arrived, he had occasion to ride the bus from his home to the downtown area. When he sat down, he discovered that the driver had accidentally given him a quarter too much change.

As he considered what to do, he thought to himself, you better give the quarter back. It would be wrong to keep it. Then he thought, "Oh, forget it, it's only a quarter. Who would worry about this little amount? Besides, the bus company already gets too much fare; they will never miss it. Accept it as a gift from God and keep quiet."

When his stop came, he paused momentarily at the door, then he handed the quarter to the driver and said, "Here, you gave me too much change."

The driver with a smile, replied, "Aren't you the new preacher in town? I have been thinking lately about going to worship somewhere. I just wanted to see what you would do if I gave you too much change."

When my friend stepped off the bus, he literally grabbed the nearest light pole, and held on, and said, "Oh, God," I almost sold your Son for a quarter."