

# **What is Jesus Doing?**

## **ANOTHER SOLDIER'S STORY**

I was going to finish my testimony this week, "The Power of Yes", but yesterday, at the feeding at Our Redeemer in Winnetka, California, something amazing happened that affected me so powerfully that I had to blog it. This is a story told to me yesterday by a man named Patrick who stopped me before I gave the Word, to give me a mighty praise report to the Glory of God, about an encounter that he had with me 5 years earlier and the amazing things the Lord has done with and through him since.

Being an evangelist and shepherd to a poor flock is a high calling and a great responsibility. It often requires responding to late night calls for prayer or assistance and to those who are faint of heart or poor multi-taskers, the triage of spiritual and emotional need that is required in the emergency room of Homeless gatherings can be pretty overwhelming. Other times though, it is as if time itself slows down and one particular individual is revealed by the Holy Spirit.

Patrick was such an individual. As he reminded me yesterday, five years ago, at that very same feeding in Winnetka, he was homeless and drug-addicted and had, "out of the pride of his heart", as he put it, refused all help from friends, relatives, churches, the Government and all manner of "do-gooders", and so he found himself literally starving. Funny, you may think, that someone with so little self-respect as to fall into helpless addiction could display such high-handed pride. Ah... but the "pride of life", as John the Beloved calls it, along with the lust of the eyes and the lust of the flesh, is the devil's greatest stronghold in the unrepentant human heart. Some fellow outcasts had finally convinced Patrick that day five years ago that going to a hot lunch at Church and enduring the message from God was preferable to starving to death, and so he went. He said that his friends also convinced him that day by telling him that the preacher wasn't a "Bible-beater" and might have some cool things to say.

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Patrick reminded me how we met. He said, he had found himself listening to the Word I preached that day about the Prodigal Son and found himself in tears, realizing that the Love of God was real and he had separated himself from that amazing Grace by the hardness of his own heart. He realized for the first time that all his life he had pushed away the very people who were truly his friends and that he could be a member of the "Family of God" if he only said "yes".

I have mentioned in past blogs that the Lord commissioned me as a "Field Lieutenant" shortly after I began homeless ministry, and it has always been, even above evangelist and pastor, my favorite role. In this capacity, I am allowed to "see" beyond natural sight, into the soul and spirit of men and women who may not even yet fully believe, but who are surely the Called, as is revealed to me by the Holy Spirit. This is a gift from God and one that once revealed becomes my responsibility (and great honor) to reveal to them their true nature, in Christ Jesus and then to pray the Armor of God on them, "welded on with the Blood of the Lamb".

To make this long story somewhat shorter (my Pastor tells me my blogs are too long!), this is exactly what happened that day with Patrick. He gave his life to the Lord that day and immediately began thinking differently. I pulled him out of the feeding, prayed with him, and after strapping on the Armor, I gave him a Gideon Bible and highlighted some scriptures (as well as telling him to read the Gospel of John at least 10 times prayerfully).

After Patrick reminded me of all this, he told me that in the intervening 5 years, he had become clean and sober, gotten food stamps and SSI (he does have a real disability) and has a roof over his head. He spends his days riding through the Valley on his bike looking for homeless folks to help as he himself was helped, by speaking of God's Love to them and letting them know where the food, clothing and social services are.

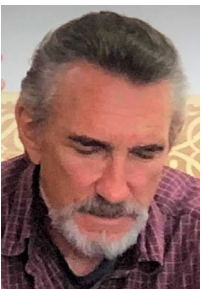
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He told me that just the day before yesterday, when it was pouring rain in the San Fernando Valley, he was riding his bike in his multi-layered "rain suit" as he called it. He was heading to a Church where he had been helped by a caretaker once, and happened across a homeless kid in a T-shirt begging on a corner a block away, soaked to the skin and shivering. Patrick led him over to the Church and found the caretaker who had become his friend. He got a plastic garbage bag from his friend and a scissors, and cut a head-sized hole in the bag. Then Patrick took off one of his sweatshirts and gave it to the boy, put the Hefty-bag raincoat on him and took him to get a cheeseburger while gently leading him to the Lord. Patrick said he would try to bring this kid with him to the meal the following week.

All this to say, the Great Commission makes us all "commissioned officers" in Christ's glorious Army as we are all saints in His service. I have discipled many soldiers over time and have forged some wonderful relationships along the way, but this story of how one brief, intense encounter with the Living God can change a life, I hope, will give us all resolve to be ready for that next encounter.

*And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.*

- Matthew 28:18-20



*In perfect joy, with His Love,,*

*- John Henry Raskin, Roadhouse Rabbi*