

ABOUT THE FATHER'S BUSINESS

"...Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have...I Peter 3:15a

'.....the Lord has plucked a brand from the fire.'" Zechariah 3:2b

The Saturday morning began, as did many in the Ozarks during springtime. Our father directed the activities for the 'family' garden. I, along with my two younger brothers were given hoes and instructed to dig ONLY the weeds growing between the rows of vegetables. Soon our parents strolled out to see if we had made any progress. A neighbor approached Dad telling him that Mr. Smith; who lived down the street had been hospitalized.

Mr. Smith drove past our house many times during the day. We sometimes sat on the front porch and watched as he unloaded his groceries or mowed his lawn. None of us had given him much attention, as he was quiet and stayed to himself. However, my Dad, always sensitive to the Lord's leading spoke to our mother saying, "I need to go to the hospital." Mother suggested that he do it next day as we came in from church, as he would be in his 'Sunday clothes'. Dad said he felt the visit should not wait. He went inside, picked up his small New Testament and drove the few blocks to the hospital.

Entering the room, Mr. Smith, reached for Dad's hand saying, "Oh, Preacher, I prayed that you would come." Dad spoke with him for a few minutes to inquire of his illness and then came the question, "Are things right between you and the Lord?" Mr. Smith sighed and said, "I don't want to close my eyes because everything is dark. A suffocating blackness engulfs me." My father quietly gave him the message of salvation and the patient eagerly asked, "Will you pray with me?" Dad asked him to repeat the sinner's prayer. Afterwards, he said, "My! Everything is bright!"

Returning, Dad related the conversation to us as we sat at the dining room table for our noon meal. Coming in from Sunday morning services, the neighbor who approached us on Saturday came running to tell us that Mr. Smith had died quietly a few hours earlier. One day we will meet Mr. Smith in heaven because my dad was sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

How many times have I been guilty of saying, "I'll call later" when the Lord is prodding me to obey NOW?

Shortly after Mr. Smith went to be with Jesus we attended a missions convention. A banner across the platform carried the theme "*The Crumbling Gates of Hell*". Missionaries, dressed in the attire from their fields of service entered the stadium, bringing home the fact that every soul saved from eternal separation from God is redeemed as 'a brand from the burning' thus thwarting Satan's scheme.

Dear Jesus, thank you so much for salvation. Please do not let me forget that others have not accepted YOU. By persuading others of your plan of salvation hell's walls crumble.

Please keep me sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit to tell others that YOU are standing at hearts' doors, ready to enter and take up residence.

Submitted by Carol Bybee