

Collection of humorous meditations writing in the daily-devotional format.

Burnt Offerings: Parables in Slang

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BURNT OFFERINGS

Parables in Slang

By

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The Fledgling Pastor Who Did as Well as Could Be Expected

*I was sick and you visited me.
– Matthew 25:36b*

A newest member in the ranks of the ordained got a nervous stomach whenever he thought of making a hospital call. In seminary he had sparred with spiritual comforting by way of approved textbooks. But now he was inside the ropes and expected to take on the real thing.

The closest he'd ever come to experiencing pain was a penicillin shot; and in the art of binding up wounds, it was Band-Aids, iodine and a kiss to make it well.

Nevertheless, there was a command burning inside him: "As you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me." And his professor in Pastoral Care 256 section B had told him of the unspeakable joys in being God's vessel.

So being a man of faith he swallowed hard and advised his flock that in their moments of pain and loneliness God's help was as near as the phone. He put his prayer book at the ready and waited for his moment of truth.

One evening, parishioner Johanson drove down the street and made an unexpected exit through the windshield, landing in the hospital's emergency room. His life was intact, but several bones needed realignment.

Hearing of the accident the young pastor grabbed his prayer book and, en route to the hospital, dress rehearsed several comforting thoughts designed for such occasion. He came through the rehearsal as a tower of spiritual strength and a conveyor of great compassion. It was opening night and he was ready.

Now his seminary books had neither pictures nor sound tracks, so what he was to see was a first for him. There stretched out with guy wire and pulleys like a repair job in a machine shop was Johanson. Tubes, needles, and gadgets protruding conspicuously from all over this body. His face was the color of sunset patterned with a black embroidery.

From the opening curtain it was stage fright. The pastor's mouth dried out, instead of his comforting thoughts he remembered he should be home preparing Sunday's sermon. His spirit fled. His body would have gone too except Mrs. Johanson was there watching.

A strange power held his tongue. He felt the pounding heart, the perspiration on his head, and his stomach shifting in to reverse. Then the patient rolled his eyes, opened his mouth, and groaned something awful.

The symbol of God's presence cried, "Amen!" and fled.

Late the next morning he stumbled out of bed and went to the kitchen to tell his wife he was leaving the ministry. But before he could open his mouth, she told him that Mrs. Johanson had called and said how his visit had helped them greatly. They had gained composure through his quiet, sensitive mood and found strength for the night through his silent prayer.

Thought for the day: *Being an amateur is not always a handicap.*

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