

Slices of Life

Rev. Kendale Finley
Master of Divinity



Experiences and lessons gained
from over eighty years of
living and ministry.

A meaningful, yet humorous collection of anecdotal stories that will make you think, and laugh. This book is written in the hope that each reader will enjoy and remember each slice of their lives as a precious gift from God.

Slices of Life

By Rev. Kendale Finley

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Sunday School Report

In my younger days Sunday School played an important part of church life. From nursery to older adults all ages were expected to attend Sunday School before Sunday worship.

In going through some records of my grandparents I ran across a pamphlet containing a Sunday lesson for a young school class.

It was dated back in the eighteen hundreds.

And not only did it contain the lesson and scripture reading but on the last page it had a place for the student to comment on what they learned.

On this particular pamphlet a young girl wrote that she was not able to attend Sunday School because she was ill.

However, she indicated that she read her lesson and completed the assignment. She then ended her comments with a signature that read: "Her mother!"

The Last Sermon

Sometimes ministry to a particular church does not go well. Either the minister didn't know how to be a minister, or they were not able to connect with the congregation, or the church failed in their part to share the Good News.

A wise man once wrote. "Many churches fail in their mission because they have taillights where their headlights ought to be." And that is a frustration for ministers.

I am sure many ministers, (and once in my fifty-year career), want to give one last broadside from the pulpit.

And if they are smart, they will have the bags already packed, the car gassed up with the motor running and the front door open with the car standing ready at the back door!

Now I have to admit it is not a very compassionate thing to do but I would feel good in the moment!

Dear reader, thanks for listening to a seasoned minister who once had such a desire!

The Silver Switch

On my sister's coffee table there was a black plastic box. It was about four inches long, two inches wide and two inches tall. Karol got it from a magic shop.

It was a very plain box except for a silver switch on its top.

No hinges could be seen, no instructions given, just this silver switch sitting there.

The way it worked was when your curiosity gets the best of you, you reach over and flip the switch.

The box immediately starts to shake and then a hidden hinged door opens at the top and a plastic hand slowly emerges from the box, working its way to the switch and turns itself off.

The hand retreats into the box, the box stops shaking and is still.

Now here is a device that makes as much noise and fuss as possible in turning itself off.

I have been in church board meetings just like that!

This is MY Pew

People in church tend to “stake out their claim” when it comes to pew selection.

Once there were three elderly ladies who always sat in the same pew.

It was decided to put ceiling fans in and two of the fans were directly over the lady’s pew.

It didn’t take long for their complaint to reach my office.

“It is creating a draft down our necks! Why can’t you move them?”

Any suggesting about moving them to a new spot fell on deaf ears.

Once when I entered the pulpit, I saw that the attendance was low that Sunday, but everyone was sitting in their usual place.

I responded with, “Well, the milk cow syndrome has struck again! You may be the only cow in the barn, but you go to the same stall!”

Trusting God

One of my favorite stories talks about our trust in God. Here is the story.

Hurrying home one dark, cloudy night, a man jumped a fence and took a short cut through a vacant lot.

Suddenly, the ground gave way beneath him, and he fell into a hole.

Frantically clawing at the earth as he fell, his hands caught on a rock jutting out from the side of the pit.

Grabbing hold, he hung on for dear life!

Everything was pitch black in the pit, so he didn't know that his shoes hung only a foot or so from the bottom of the hole!

"Help!" He screamed. "Is anybody up there?"

"Yes," answered a calm quiet voice.

"Well, who is it?". He demanded.

"It's the Lord," the voice replied.

Startled by this response, he paused for a second, but as his grip began to weaken, he cried, "Can you help me?"

"Yes, I can" was the quiet reply.

Exasperated, he yelled, "Well, WILL you help me?"

"Yes, I will." Came the answer. "Just let go."

Silence.

Then finally, he called out again, “Is there anyone else out there?”

“This is My Story”

It was Founders Day at the little country church called New Bethel.

On this day the church was filled with some 70 to 90 people, people who usually stayed home on Sundays would come not only for the morning service but would stay for an afternoon and evening service as well. (I guess if you are only going to go to church once a year, you might as well make a day of it!)

As for me, my favorite part of the day was the noon meal.

That was when all the pews in the church were pushed to the outer walls, except for three which were spaced parallel with each other about three feet apart.

Large planks were then placed on the backs of these pews forming a table. On this platform they laid out a feast of the best country cooking around anywhere.

Now for an eight-year-old preacher's kid, that's heaven!

Such was my anticipation of the gastronomical event that I did not mind the long sermons (some of which would last for over an hour!).

However, there was one event which tried my patience; it was the old-fashioned testimony time.

This was where people would stand and give thanks to God for His intervention into their lives.

Now, I wouldn't have minded this so much if it had not been for Mrs. Davis. She was good for forty-five minutes!

Now Mrs. Davis was an older lady who lived in town but kept her loyalty to this country church.

And what a testimony she gave! Strangers who never met her would walk away feeling they had known her all their lives.

There were very few areas of her life which she left out. The conditions of her finances, the state of her garden, her relationship with her neighbors and distant relatives, the contents of her home, all shared ending with a long oratory of thanks for God who had met her every need.

In particular it was her health which held center stage.

Whatever ailment she endured during the past year was shared.

(Fortunately, she was able to stick to the last twelve months; all previous ailments were covered in last year's testimony).

She would share, in graphic detail, the ailment involved, and the location of the ailment (almost everything I know about anatomy, I learned from Mrs. Davis).

She would then point out the many attempts at a cure and the failure of modern medical science to provide her with any relief.

Then she shared with a clear voice the deliverance that God brought into her life.

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As I reflected on her testimony, I realized that what she was doing was telling her life story. That story that was unique and special to a person who genuinely loved God.

So, dear reader, what's YOUR story?

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