

Chapter 8

“GIVE US A SHOVE, LORD!”

It was a beautiful, sunny Sunday morning. I was on a 'spiritual high' as I had been for the past three weeks. Though decisions had to be made, my walk with the Lord was very special. The Youth work was really prospering and many lives were being changed. New people were coming each week and other churches were beginning to identify with us. But this day was to be different!

Early in the morning service, I had a deep sense of the Lord's presence and His small inner voice spoke to my spirit.

"It's time to go home " He said.

"I can't get up and leave now" I thought. "What will the congregation think? They'll assume I'm not enjoying the service!"

The inner voice persisted until, after half an hour or so, I quietly rose from my seat and walked out of the church. It was about a mile to our home and as I walked slowly in that direction I talked to the Lord. Anyone passing would have thought I was muttering to myself, but the Spirit's presence was so real as I poured out my frustrations to Him.

As I walked past Brewery Field, home of Bridgend Rugby club, the pride of all local sports fans, I came upon a small boy struggling with his tricycle. The front wheel and rear left wheel were on the sidewalk but the other rear wheel was still at road level. He was trying with all his little strength, to get the tricycle onto the sidewalk. As he saw me approach, he lifted his tear-stained face and said,

"Give us a shove, mister."

I reached down my hand, took hold of the back of the tricycle and with little effort, sent the toddler happily on his way. As he turned the corner, he looked back and waved just as I was saying to my unseen companion,

"Please, give me a shove, Lord."

I felt much as that little one must have felt. A wide open pathway ahead of him but struggling to know how to go on. As I continued that walk, a prayer born of the Spirit began to come from my lips. Since that day I have repeated this prayer so often that I know it almost word for word as spoken that first time so long ago. I no longer speak out this prayer as it has become so much a part of me that it is now truly, the prayer of the heart.

Some time after this I read about the 'Desert Fathers'. These men (and women) lived in the 4th century after Christianity had been made respectable by Rome. Believers were no longer being put to death for the Faith. How then, were they to 'carry their cross' and 'die to self'?

The Desert Fathers decided that a life in the solitude of the Egyptian desert, away from all the attractions of this world's vanity, would amount to such 'martyrdom'. They meditated on many things, especially prayer, and how one could "pray without ceasing".

Among the teachings that caught my attention was this; that if one repeated a prayer often enough, it left the lips and became a 'prayer of the heart'. Thus, although the person is no longer speaking, his heart continues to cry out to God in 'ceaseless prayer'. This prayer has become such a one to me.

"Lord, I long to walk in Your will. I ask nothing else but that, when I come to the end of my journey, I will hear You say, 'Well done, good and faithful servant'. I know I am foolish and even stupid at times, and that I will step out of Your will, but I give You 100% permission (I actually said 110% but a Physics teacher should

know better!) to whip me back into line. I do not ask to know what Your will is nor to see the path ahead but simply, that You keep me in Your will".

God's way of answering that prayer has molded my understanding of the "walk of faith" and helped me to understand some of the difficulties of Hebrews 11 - that great chapter on "the heroes of the faith" - as some would call them. I will explain myself later as it becomes evident how the Lord has led me in His will.