

TOURS! TOURS! TOURS!

“Oh no! No Mom, can’t I just stay in bed? Why can’t we just stay home for once, like the other kids do? Do you have to keep dragging us here, there, and everywhere all the time? It’s so boring!” To this barrage of protest, my mother simply answered, “Some day, you’ll appreciate all this.” Grumbling we kids would struggle into our clothes, eat breakfast, and be off on whatever excursion my mother had in mind for us.

It was not unusual for mom to get us children up as early as 3 a.m. to take a bus, train, or a ferry boat to parts unknown. My mom loved to travel and see all kinds of historical landmarks, museums, churches, botanical gardens, and architectural buildings. The list is never ending of all the places she would drag us. We would travel for four or five hours, get off and have tea and crumpets, then transfer onto another bus, which would take us to our destination another three hours away. There were boring times and how I dreaded them. We could curl up and sleep for a while or read the books we’d brought along. Mom did do some ‘sing-a-longs’ with us or we’d play the ‘alphabet games’, and ‘I spied.’ although that passed some of the time, my mom would rather watch the scenery or talk to the fellow passengers. Whenever we complained or got restless, mom would say, “you’ll remember this some day and appreciate it.”

To my surprise, the day did come when I appreciated all these excursions and the places I’d been. It is a great heritage that was given to me and enhanced my cultural perspective and interest in historical settings. My life has been enriched because my mother risked the lamenting of unhappy children to instill in them, a great love of the world into which they were born.



Written By
Liz Burke
January 25, 1990

THE WATER-BEARER
Author unknown

A water-bearer in India had two large pots, each hung on each end of a pole which he carried across his neck. One of the pots had a crack in it, and while the other pot was perfect and always delivered a full portion of water at the end of the long walk from the stream to the master's house, the cracked pot arrived only half full.

For a full two years this went on daily, with the bearer delivering only one and a half pots full of water in his master's house. Of course, the perfect pot was proud of its accomplishments, perfect to the end for which it was made. But the poor cracked pot was ashamed of its own imperfections, and miserable that it was able to accomplish only half of what it had been made to do.

After two years of what it perceived to be a bitter failure, it spoke to the water bearer one day by the stream. "I am ashamed of myself, and I want to apologize to you." "Why?" asked the bearer. "What are you ashamed of?" "I have been able, for these past two years, to deliver only half my load because this crack in my side causes water to leak out all the way back to your master's house. Because of my flaws, you have to do all of this work, and you don't get full value from your efforts," the pot said.

The water bearer felt sorry for the old cracked pot, and in his compassion he said, "As we return to the master's house, I want you to notice the beautiful flowers along the path." Indeed, as they went up the hill, the old cracked pot took notice of the sun warming the beautiful wild flowers on the side of the path, and this cheered it some. But at the end of the trail, it still felt bad because it had leaked out half its load, and so again it apologized to the bearer for its failure.

The bearer said to the pot, "Did you notice that there were flowers only on your side of your path, but not on the other pot's side? That's because I have always known about your flaw, and I took advantage of it. I planted flower seeds on your side of the path, and every day while we walk back from the stream, you've watered them. For two years I have been able to pick these beautiful flowers to decorate my master's table. Without you being just the way you are, he would not have this beauty to grace his house."

Each of us has our own unique flaws. We're all cracked pots. But if we will allow it, the Lord will use our flaws to grace His Father's table. In God's great economy, nothing goes to waste. So as we seek ways to minister together, and as God calls you to the tasks He has appointed for you, don't be afraid of your flaws. Acknowledge them, and allow Him to take advantage of them, and you, too, can be the cause of beauty in His pathway. Go out boldly, knowing that in our weakness we find His strength. And that "In Him every one of God's promises is a Yes."

Submitted by: **Liz Burke**

Tucson, AZ

Liz read Yesterdays Pearls section titled "Second Time Around" and felt this story presents a lesson we can all learn from

BLIZZARD OF '49

New Year's day dawned still and bright in Cheyenne, Wyoming. It was a beautiful morning and warmer than usual for January. By noon, the sky had clouded up, but no one paid any attention for the weatherman had predicted only light snow flurries. As the hours advanced through the day, it began to snow, a few flakes at a time, then harder and the sky grew darker.

By the next morning it was snowing hard and the wind was whipping it up. Through out the day it snowed and snowed and the wind continued to blow. The third day came and it still stormed. By now, cars were buried under the snow. Ten-foot drifts brought everything to a stand still. Nothing was moving except the government snowplows.



We were warm and cozy inside our home. There were others less fortunate. Dad climbed through the small front window and shoveled to keep a pathway cleared. Then Dick, my older brother, would do the same thing a couple of hours later. I remembered it just snowed, snowed, and snowed, while Jack Frost made lovely patterns of ice on our window panes. Luckily the coal bin had just been filled. We had plenty of food as mom believed in keeping ahead. Whenever she shopped for groceries, she always bought two of everything. One we'd use, the other was an extra one. It was her food storage over the years that made it easy to shop in much the same manner later when I got married.

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It took several hours of digging to dig the cars out, with neighbor helping neighbor. We were finally able to go out and play, after being cooped in for seven days. We would sleigh ride down the drifts, build snow forts, and snowmen using one of dad's caps and a carrot from mom's fridge. A few pieces of coal from the coal bin made him some sparkling black eyes. But the most fun of all



r were the snowball fights with Dick and dad against us three kids, then came the hot chocolate that mom made.

Written By Liz Burke-March 1995

THE TABLECLOTH

The pastor and his wife, newly assigned to their first ministry, to reopen a church in suburban Brooklyn, arrived in early October excited about their opportunities. When they saw their church, it was very run down and needed much work. They set a goal to have everything done in time to have their first service on Christmas eve.

They worked hard, repairing pews, plastering walls, painting, etc, and on Dec. 18th were ahead of schedule and just about finished. On Dec. 19th a terrible tempest - a driving rainstorm - hit the area and lasted for two days. On the 21st, the pastor went over to the church. His heart sank when he saw that the roof had leaked, causing a large area of plaster about 20 feet by 8 feet to fall off the front wall of the sanctuary just behind the pulpit, beginning about head high. The pastor cleaned up the mess on the floor, and not knowing what else to do but postpone the Christmas Eve service, headed home.

On the way he noticed that a local business was having a flea market type sale for charity so he stopped in. One of the items was a beautiful handmade, ivory colored, crocheted tablecloth with exquisite work, fine colors and a Cross embroidered right in the center. It was just the right size to cover up the hole in the front wall. He bought it and headed back to the church.

By this time it had started to snow. An older woman running from the opposite direction was trying to catch the bus. She missed it. The pastor invited her to wait in the warm church for the next bus 45 minutes later. She sat in a pew and paid no attention to the pastor while he got a ladder, hangers, etc., to put up the tablecloth as a wall tapestry. The pastor could hardly believe how beautiful it looked and it covered up the entire problem area. Then he noticed the woman walking down the center aisle. Her face was like a sheet.

"Pastor," she asked, "Where did you get that tablecloth?"

The pastor explained. The woman asked him to check the lower right corner to see if the initials, EBG were crocheted into it there. They were. These were the initials of the woman, and she had made this tablecloth 35 years before, in Austria.

The woman could hardly believe it as the pastor told how he had just gotten the tablecloth. The woman explained that before the war she and her husband were well-to-do people in Austria. When the Nazis came, she was forced to leave. Her husband was going to follow her the next week. She was captured, sent to prison and never saw her husband or her home again.

The pastor wanted to give her the tablecloth; but she made the pastor keep it for the church. The pastor insisted on driving her home, that was the least he could do. She lived on the other side of Staten Island and was only in Brooklyn for the day for a housecleaning job.

What a wonderful service they had on Christmas Eve. The church was almost full. The music and the spirit were great. At the end of the service, the pastor and his wife greeted everyone at the door and many said that they would return. One older man, whom the pastor recognized from the neighborhood, continued to sit in one of the pews and stare, and the pastor wondered why he wasn't leaving. The man asked him where he got the tablecloth on the front wall because it was identical to one that his wife had made years ago when they lived in Austria before the war and how could there be two tablecloths so much alike? He told the pastor how the Nazis came, how he forced his wife to flee for her safety, and he was supposed to follow her, but he was arrested and put in a prison. He never saw his wife or his home again all the 35 years in between.

The pastor asked him if he would allow him to take him for a little ride. They drove to Staten Island and to the same house where the pastor had taken the woman three days earlier. He helped the man climb the three flights of stairs to the woman's apartment, knocked on the door and he saw the greatest Christmas reunion he could ever imagine.---a true story.

Submitted by Liz Burke
Tucson, AZ

Author unknown, but one of her favorites and wanted to share...

August 2007

THE STAR-THROWER

Once upon a time there was a wise man that used to go to the ocean to do his writing. One day he was walking along the shore. as he looked down the beach, he saw a human figure moving like a dancer. he smiled to himself to think of someone who would dance to the day. so he began to walk faster to catchup.

As he got closer, he saw that it was a young man and the young man wasn't dancing, but instead he was reaching down to the shore, picking up something and very gently throwing it into the ocean.

As he got closer he called our, "Good morning! What are you doing?" The young man paused, looked up and replied, "Throwing starfish in the ocean."

"I guess I should have asked, why are you throwing starfish in the ocean?"

"The sun is up and the tide is going out. And if I don't throw them in they'll die."

"But young man, don't you realize that there are miles and miles of beach and starfish all along it. You can't possible make a difference!"

The young man listened politely. Then bent down, picked another starfish and threw it into the sea, past the breaking waves and said, "It made a difference for that one."

There is something very special in each and every one of us and we must each find our own starfish. We have all been gifted with the ability to make a difference and if we throw our stars wisely and well---the world will be blessed!

Submitted by Liz Burke
Tucson, AZ

A story worth re-telling
Author unknown

August 2007

THE CANAL

I wonder what it would be like to travel down life's lane and relive some of its more precious memories. Perhaps, some of the happier times were while we lived in Oxford, England. Tony and I were big enough to explore on our own. Often we rode our bikes down to the playgrounds by the canal. It was exciting to ride across the railroad tracks, especially, if we could beat the train, when we heard whistling around the bend. Often I rushed ahead with Tony yelling at me to stop and wait, but I raced recklessly on dreaming that I was racing, racing, racing to win.

When we rode along the canal on our bike's I could look across at Hillary's house and her back garden. Some days, her mother invited me for tea. What scrumptious times they were. Tea would be set up in the garden with their fine English China and served with an assortment of tiny cakes, biscuits (cookies), and scones. The scones were my favorite. My eyes lit up as I chose the scone with the largest, plumpish raisins. One time, a white bunny came from his burrow in the side of the garden, and we pretended that this was the white rabbit from 'Alice in Wonderland.' I got to be Alice because that was my middle name.

Some of our most enjoyable times riding along the canal were when we rode as a family. We often rode bikes around the block in the evening, their blocks equaling three of our city ones. I loved the long rides along the canal when we took a bag of crusts to feed the ducks. If we were lucky, we'd see the lovely white swans that glided through the water so gracefully. If mom felt like it, we'd take the longer way around and ride through the farmer's pasture. Pass the cows, horses, and sheep that were so gentle that we would stop and pet them.

Other favorite times were our Sunday trips to Central Park. There we walked through beautiful botanical gardens with every kind of rose imaginable, and the fragrances were heavenly. Tony and I were often allowed to run ahead a short distance, but we had to stay on the paths; we couldn't frolic on the green grass that invited us so.

The exciting weekends were when the boats were on the canal and we'd watch the college teams compete and row against one another. It was exciting to run along side the boats and cheer them on. I had such a fickle

heart—I cheered for whichever one was ahead. My reasoning being that the one ahead would win.

Reliving those precious memories makes me appreciate all my family has done for me. Appreciation of botanical gardens, Hillary's friendship, the animals, the canal boat races, and riding as a family are all part of a precious heritage.

Written By Liz Burke—March 15, 1990

The Duck & the Devil

There was a little boy visiting his grandparents on their farm. He was given a slingshot to play with out in the woods. He practiced in the woods, but he could never hit the target. Getting a little discouraged, he headed back for dinner. As he was walking back he saw Grandma's pet duck.

Just out of impulse, he let the slingshot fly, hit the duck square in the head, and killed it. He was shocked and grieved.

In a panic, he hid the dead duck in the wood pile, only to see his sister watching! Sally had seen it all, but she said nothing.

After lunch the next day Grandma said, "Sally, let's wash the dishes." But Sally said, "Grandma, Johnny told me he wanted to help in the kitchen. Then she whispered to him, "Remember the duck? So Johnny did the dishes.

Later that day, Grandpa asked if the children wanted to go fishing and Grandma said, "I'm sorry but I need Sally to help make supper."

Sally just smiled and said, "Well that's all right because Johnny told me he wanted to help." She whispered again, "Remember the duck?" So Sally went fishing and Johnny stayed to help.

After several days of Johnny doing both his chores and Sally's... he finally couldn't stand it any longer.

He came to Grandma and confessed that he had killed the duck. Grandma knelt down, gave him a hug, and said, "Sweetheart, I know. You see, I was standing at the window and I saw the whole thing, but because I love you, I forgave you. I was just wondering how long you would let Sally make a slave of you."

Thought for the day and every day thereafter?

Whatever is in your past, whatever you have done... and the devil keeps throwing it up in your face (lying, cheating, debt, fear, bad habits, hatred, anger, bitterness, etc.) ...whatever it is....You need to know that God was standing at the window and He saw the whole thing..... He has seen your whole life. He wants you to know that He loves you and that you are forgiven.

He's just wondering how long you will let the devil make a slave of you. The great thing about God is that when you ask for forgiveness, He not only forgives you, but He forgets.... It is by God's grace and mercy that we are saved.

Submitted By Liz Burke
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