

The Spirit Worked at Midnight

by Walter L. Wilson, M.D.

Our Lord is not limited by time nor place in His dealings with lost souls. The Scriptures record divine blessings in the bedroom and on the road, at the pool and in the temple, on a wellcurb and in a tree-top; some came by day and some by night. Time is no factor with the Lord when the fate of a soul is at stake.

There lived in a certain city a young Christian woman with an unsaved husband. This husband was not very friendly to Christian things, in fact he opposed and hindered his wife in her desire to serve the Lord and to attend the meetings of Christians. It was the old story of a divided house. The husband was not always passively opposed, but sometimes was quite hostile in his attitude toward the things that his companion loved.

The wife's mother who lived in the home with them and who was also a godly Christian, frequently joined the daughter in prayer for her companion. Often during the day they poured out their hearts to the Lord of the harvest on his behalf. They did not know how the Holy Spirit would work, but they looked to Him with expectation month after month and year after year, apparently in vain.

The Spirit does not always work as quickly as we would like, nor in the ways that we plan, for "His ways are not our ways." Our friend would return from his work day after day, unchanged and unmoved. He opposed any Christian work on the part of his wife, would not permit her to give her money nor her time to any Christian enterprise. He would not accompany her to the services. Christians were not invited to the home, nor would they be welcome if they came.

It seemed to the wife that the more she prayed the harder he became. Nothing seemed to soften his heart nor change his attitude. He seemed to be confirmed in his worldliness and established in his animosities. Other Christians were asked to pray for him and frequently did so. He avoided meeting Christians on the street, and if any should come to the home to visit, he would conveniently absent himself, lest they should talk

to him about his soul.

The friend of whom we are writing was about thirty-three years of age — a fine, tall, stalwart man. He had a good position, made fairly good wages, and took good care of his home in a financial way. In most ways he was an ideal husband. His only fault was in his attitude toward the Lord and the things of God.

One evening, some friends requested Mr. P-- to go with them for a ride out in the country, where some business was to be transacted. These men took a few drinks of liquor after they were outside the city limits, and as a result, the driver lost control of the car and they went into a ditch. Fortunately no one was injured, but through this narrow escape from death, the husband began to think of his eternal welfare. He had never before been near death. This new experience disturbed his peace of mind. The prayers of the wife and her mother were being answered in part.

When Mr. P-- returned home and told the story of the accident, there was much thanksgiving to God on the part of those who loved him, because God had preserved him from death and eternal punishment. Mrs. P-- had not thought of this peculiar way in which the Holy Spirit might work in dealing with her companion. She could readily see, however, that this sudden wreck had caused the husband to think along the very lines about which she had been praying. She had asked the Lord to make him look at life more seriously, and to cause eternal things to become more real to him.

The next day, the husband returned to his work and continued for several days as though nothing had happened. Meanwhile, the two faithful ones at home continued to ask the Lord to deepen the work in his heart and to finish what He had begun. Shortly thereafter, another automobile trip was taken, this time accompanied by a gentleman and his wife. Mr. and Mrs. P-- occupied the rear seat of the car. As they were hurrying along the highway, another car suddenly turned in from a side road and a collision was inevitable. The two cars did not collide broadside, but the glancing blow was sufficient to overturn the car in which all four were riding. This trip had been preceded by a prayer for their preservation. The Holy Spirit heard the cry and graciously saved them from personal injury. Again, a prayer of thanksgiving

arose to God for the wonderful way in which He had preserved them from injury and death.

Returning home, Mrs. P-- reminded the husband again of the dangers besetting his path, and the doom that would await him if he should die unsaved. He did not reply with his usual bitterness, nor his accustomed sneer at the things of God. It could be seen that he was somewhat worried, and that the two accidents had solemnized his thinking and aroused his fears. During the day, earnest prayer was made to God that no accident would fatally injure him and that Satan would not nullify the effects already produced.

Several weeks passed with no apparent change in the attitude and decision of Mr. P--. As Thanksgiving Day approached, it was planned by the family that they, together with another group, would go for a picnic out in the woods. Although there was a Bible Conference that day which the wife and mother desired very much to attend, they thought it wise to go with the husband, hoping that in the quiet of the countryside, they might have an opportunity of winning him for Christ. The journey was made without mishap, and the day was filled with pleasantries of many kinds. They remained during the evening, for the weather was balmy and the fields were very inviting, and returned quite late at night.

As the group rode along at a rather rapid pace, suddenly there loomed up in front of the car a truck stalled on the road and without lights. The sudden danger frightened the occupants of the car and the driver attempted in vain to swerve his car sufficiently to miss the truck, but he failed. One of the front wheels struck the rear of the truck, overturning the car. One was killed and two were injured, but Mr. and Mrs. P-- with the mother escaped uninjured. This tragedy was the final blow to the indifference of our friend.

The surviving ones hastened to obtain help, and after doing all that could be done, they came directly to my home. It was past midnight, and I was just retiring after some late visits, but I hastened to the door. Mr. P-- stood there trembling and very nervous. I invited him at once to enter and be seated in my office. He recounted to me the story of his three accidents. "I want to be saved," he said. "You know how I have avoided you

for years, and did not want either your presence or your message. Now I want to be saved. My wife and mother have often prayed for me, and I know you have. I have acted very foolish, but now God has been warning me and I want to become a Christian. The hour is late, but will you take time to tell me?"

It was with great joy that I took the Word of God and opened it to help this seeker. We first read together I Timothy 3:15 — "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, the Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.' We may be certain of this," I said, "that God sent Christ to save you, and that Jesus came with the express purpose of saving you. You do not need to wonder whether He will. You may know that He will. You do not need to question His desire, His coming proves that desire. Would you like Him to save you now?"

"That is what I came to you for tonight, doctor," he said. "I do want Jesus Christ to save me tonight if He will."

The next Scripture which we read was Isaiah 53:5 — "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." It seemed to be a new thought to this man that Christ had been punished for him. The Scripture was very plain and he seemed to grasp it readily. The Holy Spirit had already convicted him of his need, had revealed his future doom to him, and was now bringing before him the work of the Lord Jesus on the Cross as a substitute for him. In the car outside, in the front of the house, the wife and mother were earnestly praying for his conversion to God through the Lord Jesus Christ.

"How do I know," said he, "that Jesus really was dying for me? I want to be sure that He was."

"Did we not just read that Christ came to save sinners? Let us read it again in Romans 5:6 — 'For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.'"

"That Scripture must apply to me," he said, "for I feel so helpless and utterly hopeless. I cannot see why God should want to save me now, after these years of rebellion and my attitude of hatred toward Him. Are you sure that it refers to me?"

"Yes, I am quite sure," I replied, "for the Lord Jesus Himself

said, 'All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out' (John 6:37). Notice also, Mr. P--, John 1:12 — 'But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.'" I assured him that Jesus Christ is now on the throne waiting to receive him as a sinner, and ready to save his soul if he would only trust him to do it.

"I will gladly trust Him right now," said he; and kneeling beside the desk, he committed his soul to Christ Jesus, the Lord, and received Him with his whole heart. Peace at once enveloped his soul, and tears of joy filled his eyes. He thanked the Saviour for dying for him. Mr. P-- soon made his way to the door and thence to the automobile, where the wife and mother were waiting, pleading and watching. There was a wonderful reunion out there in the darkness of the night. The light of the Lord, however, filled their hearts and they went home rejoicing. Mr. P-- is now serving the Lord among the people of God and telling the story of salvation to all that he may meet.

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