

## The Garage Man Got Repaired

by Walter L. Wilson, M.D.

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Mr. J-- owned and operated a garage -- repairing automobiles, mending tires, and storing cars. His was a rough life, and he made no pretense of being a Christian. His wife was a devoted follower of the Lord, and often pleaded with God for her husband and with him for God.

At times, Mr. J-- came home from work drunk. On these occasions, he mistreated his good wife, using language most unbecoming, and acting more like a brute than a husband. This only caused more earnest prayer on the part of Mrs. J--, though sometimes her heart was sorely tempted to forsake him and find more congenial company.

An advertisement was received at this home, in which a Bible conference was announced. Beautiful pictures of the lake, the auditorium, and the parking lot around the lake appeared to be enticing. Mrs. J-- had heard of the speakers, and had a deep desire to hear them. She mentioned the fact to her husband several times, but received from him only sneers and jibes about her Christianity.

As the time for the conference to convene drew near, Mrs. J-- decided to go whether her husband was pleased or whether he objected. She quietly saved her money until she had a sufficient amount to pay her expenses there and back, and also to take care of her living expenses at the conference for four days.

On the morning of her departure, while at breakfast, she informed Mr. J-- of her intention. He was, of course, quite angry and said that she could go and stay, as far as he was concerned. He did not care whether she ever returned. He was tired of having her around with her psalm singing, her preaching and her prayers. He went off to work in a huff and without even saying good-bye.

Mrs. J-- arrived at the conference grounds accompanied by her son, a fine little lad of about seven years of age. They engaged a cottage near the lake and prepared to attend the services. My ministry during this particular series of meetings dealt particularly with the Spirit-filled life of believers. The lessons

were given during the morning hours. Of course in these messages there was some portion for the unsaved each morning, because Christians brought unsaved friends with them, hoping for their salvation.

During all this time Mrs. J-- was very much in prayer for her unsaved husband at home. She laid hold of God in definite petitions, asking that the husband be led to attend the conference on Saturday and Sunday. Saturday morning, about ten o'clock, her prayer was answered, for her husband drove into the conference grounds in his car, prepared for a good time on the lake, judging from the equipment he carried — bait-box, fishing tackle, etc.

In greeting her husband, Mrs. J-- exercised much wisdom, nothing being said about his need of the gospel, nor attendance at the services. The wife arranged one of the rooms in the cottage for his special use, placed his fishing equipment on the table, and disposed of his baggage. The morning service began at eleven o'clock, and Mrs. J-- was secretly hoping that the husband would go with her to the meeting. This prayer also was answered, for as she prepared to attend the service, he willingly offered to accompany her.

The subject of the morning message was "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27). I sought to impress upon the Christians that only by the ministry of the Holy Spirit through the Word of God could the soul grasp the beauties and the virtues of the Lord Jesus Christ. As the Spirit of God has the right of way in the life, He is able to so present Christ to the heart that the life of the believer is transformed. Throughout the service Mr. J-- was applying the message to himself. What did he know about Christ, or the Holy Spirit, or holiness in any form? His life was devoid of Christ. The Bible meant nothing to him. The Spirit was a stranger to him. He was convicted of his utter darkness and his need as a lost sinner.

During the afternoon, Mr. J-- went fishing. He sat in his boat with his line cast over the side, but cared little whether or not the fish were biting, for his soul was occupied with the message of the morning. He was beginning to realize in the depths of his heart that he was not prepared to meet God, and certainly was not prepared to live like a Christian at home. The sins of his past

life flooded his mind. The enmity he had shown toward his companion flashed vividly before his vision. He felt that he was only a wicked wretch. Most of the afternoon was thus spent alone on the lake, meditating as he fished.

As the evening progressed, he returned to his cabin and informed his wife that he would like to go with her to the service that evening. She had been praying most of the afternoon, for she saw that the Word of God had taken hold of her husband's heart. She pleaded with tears, and received assurance from the Lord that her petition would be granted.

A widely-known evangelist was preaching that evening, and was exalting the Lord Jesus Christ as the Lord of the soul and the Saviour from sin. Mr. J-- felt that the message was intended solely for him. He drank in every word of it. He listened intently to see whether that Saviour would save him. At the close of the service, an invitation was given, but he did not respond. It was not yet clear to his mind that the Saviour would really accept him, if he came; neither did he fully understand just how salvation would come about in his case.

Mr. and Mrs. J-- returned to their cottage after the service, he in deep soul trouble and she claiming God's promise for her husband. They retired for the night, but not to sleep. Mr. J-- rolled and tossed upon the bed — unhappy, afraid, and feeling the darkness into which his soul had been plunged. She continued to plead with God. She would not cease until he found peace. She prayed that the message of the evening might yet bring light to his heart. She also prayed that the call of God to his soul might be heard and answered by him.

Sunday morning had dawned and the chapel bell rang for the Sunday School. The little lad urged his father to attend the classes with him, but the father refused. He was too miserable to listen to the many things that would transpire in the Sunday School exercises. he did, however, promise Mrs. J-- that he would go with her to the morning service at eleven o'clock. At that meeting, I chose for the text: "Be filled with the Spirit" (Ephesians 5:18). I sought to explain that the blood of Jesus Christ must first put away our sins and blot them out before the Holy Spirit could enter and make the heart His throne. I stressed the point also that the Spirit does not want to be a mere guest,

but the Lord of the home. He does not wish to be a helper, but rather He is to be the master.

Although his misery increased, Mr. J-- listened attentively. More and more he saw that he was utterly lost, and never had been cleansed from his sins; nor had he ever experienced the saving power of the blood of Christ. Never had he knelt as a penitent at the foot of the Cross for mercy. He trembled under the preaching. Perspiration covered his brow. Misery of soul was his state, and when the service closed, Mr. J-- was so weak in body that Mrs. J-- found it necessary to assist him from the tabernacle and thence to the cottage.

After greeting the friends and helping some inquiring souls at the chapel, I went over to a neighboring building, where a sick friend was in need of medical attention. While there, a knock was heard at the door. Opening it, a little lad stood there and inquired for the doctor. I immediately recognized the boy as the little son of Mr. and Mrs. J--. When he saw me, he said, "Daddy wants to see you and asked me to bring you." I promised to go with him as soon as I could conveniently close the consultation with my patient. Then taking the little fellow by the hand, he led me to the cottage where his father awaited me.

Entering the cottage, I noticed Mr. J-- weeping, as he sat on his bed. An open Bible lay beside him. He arose quickly, clasped my hand in his, and said so earnestly, "I am so glad that you have come. I was afraid I would miss you. Do sit down and tell me how to be saved. I thought that my wife was crazy about religion, but it is I who have been the fool. I am a lost sinner and terribly guilty. I do not seem able to find the Saviour. Please sit down and tell me how I may get to Him."

How quickly I accepted his invitation, and turning to Luke 15:2, I read, "This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them." "This certainly is an assurance to you, Mr. J--, that the Lord Jesus wants to save you and will gladly welcome you, if you trust Him. Look again at this passage — I Timothy 1:15 — 'Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.' Here again you see how welcome you would be when you present yourself to the Lord Jesus by faith for the cleansing of your sins. You may wonder how He does it. Read with me I Peter 2:24 — 'Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree.' It is by dying

for you, Mr. J-- that the Lord Jesus puts away your sins. He paid the debt that you might go free."

The light began to dawn in the darkened heart of this seeker. Tears of contrition were streaming down his cheeks. His heart was soft and ready for the good seed of the Word of God. "Will you trust your soul to the Lord Jesus just now?" I inquired.

"Yes," he replied earnestly. "Since He will receive sinners, I will come to Him myself. I believe He will take me, too."

"Let us kneel together," I said, "While you tell the Saviour that you do come and that you do trust Him."

We were soon on our knees together, and Mr. J-- poured out his heart of love and gratitude to Christ for His saving power and His wonderful grace in receiving him — a poor, lost sinner. It was beautiful sight to see the seeking sinner trust the loving Saviour. Peace filled the heart of this husband, and a new joy filled the heart of the wife, who was in the other room pleading with tears for the companion of her life.

The Holy Spirit had again done His blessed work. At home and in the garage, the husband had been contemplating his life of wickedness and his bitterness toward his wife. He pretended that he wanted to come to the lake for an outing. In reality, the Holy Spirit was leading him there to find the Saviour. God heard the believing prayer of the faithful wife, and saw the hunger in the heart of the lost sinner. This is a blessed combination. At the conference grounds the Holy Spirit took the Word and made it effectual in the heart of this hungry seeker. Let us have confidence in the gracious Spirit of God that He will do His work, even though it be in a mysterious way.

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