

MISSION, 1989

One of my favorite things about being a Christian is seeing God work. This story happened the first Sunday I went to the Open Door Mission in Houston, Texas. This particular Sunday I had not been able to arrange for help in holding the program. Neither a pianist nor a song leader could come with me. No one was available to lead in a time of sharing with the men either.

I prayed a lot about the service to be held and asked God for a message which might reach someone for Christ. When I got to the chapel, a man unlocked the door and then turned on the air conditioning so it would not be hot. Shortly afterward a few men came wandering into the chapel. A very fine-looking young man came in and went right up to the piano and started to play. I thought, "Praise the Lord; someone to play the piano has been sent."

After most of the men had sat down in the pews, a man with a cane hobbled in and sat on the back pew not far from the entrance. When I asked if anyone might like to say a word about what the Lord had done in their lives, the man with the cane stood up. He had thick glasses on, as if he had had a cataract operation and needed thick lenses to correct his vision. He asked if he could come up to the front and talk, and I said, "Yes, come on up front." Hobbling to the front, he explained that he had a long story to tell. Now, I must explain that he had an impediment in his speech, but he also tried to speak fast for fear that I would not let him finish.

His story began many years earlier when he was a member of a motorcycle gang and living a rather ungodly, fast life. He was riding very fast on a Houston street that had a curve and a tunnel, which was crowded with lots of traffic as he got closer to the tunnel. He couldn't stop and saw that he was going to hit a concrete wall, which he did hit. His speech made it difficult to understand him completely because he talked as one who might have had a stroke. He was in the hospital for four years, during which time some of the motorcycle gang would visit him. He witnessed to them about the Lord because he had called on the Lord to save him before he hit the wall.

He told how his mother prayed for him when the doctors told the family he would never walk again, never talk again, and he apparently was also blind because in his message he explained that it was seven years before he could see again, many years before he could speak again, and the first thing he wanted to demonstrate, which was how the Lord let him walk again.

He sat down on the front pew and explained that he had gone to a Billy Graham crusade meeting in Houston in a wheelchair which he had been in for 20 years. As the meeting came to a close and the altar call was given, he prayed to Jesus to heal his legs so he could walk again. He demonstrated in front of us how he grabbed the arms of the wheelchair, praying for strength to stand, then he stood up, took some steps across the front without his cane to show us that God had let him walk again, and he added that it was after 20 years in a wheelchair.

Another man about 24 years old told how he had been in prison and got ahold of a Bible. He learned about the salvation of Jesus Christ being available for him and it changed his life. He was now out of prison

and had prayed that God would provide a job for him. The job became available in answer to his prayer, and he was determined to go straight.

When I got home and realized that I had gotten to see God's handiwork in today's world, I thanked the Lord for the privilege of serving him. I heard a man that was blind and now could see, was lame and now could walk, dumb and now could talk. What a joy! This was just the first Sunday I went there.