



Lovely Lord of the Lord's Day

7. She Stood the Stink

Unassuming, winsome Ruth Nyder was rewarded as the Word went to work in the life of her husband, Jack.

Ruth Nyder was a Sabbath keeper. I was her pastor. Every time I saw Ruth, whether in church, at her home, or on the street, she impressed me. It is not always easy to describe that "something" about a child of God that fills one with admiration: but whatever it is, she had it! It showed in her face. It shone from her eyes. It revealed itself in her pure and careful speech. Even her walk seemed to indicate a quiet power within, controlling her every word and act.

Ruth's husband, Jack, was different. Jack was not a professed Christian and his countenance revealed it. His "I-can-make-the-grade-on-my-own" expression excited my sympathy. Undoubtedly Jack longed for that "something" his wife possessed.

One day Jack dropped a little hint. He indicated that all was not well; that there was deep longing in his heart. Ruth noticed it. She prayed and hoped, but said nothing. How many times these hints were made, I do not know. I am inclined to think they came quite frequently. Jack was unhappy with his own outlook and found it increasingly difficult to suppress his feelings. But Ruth made Jack feel at ease in her presence. She did not seize on every unfortunate statement of his, make an issue of it, and apply high pressure. She merely smiled, spoke an encouraging word, and prayed. But she never forgot that her greatest mission was the salvation of his soul.

One day Ruth confided to me that Jack was under deep conviction. She suggested that I come over someday, let him open up to me, and then show him the way to victory. Ruth felt that the time had come. He was ready now. I consulted with my assistant pastor.

Had Ruth been a pressuring or nagging wife, we would have hesitated. But knowing her as we felt we did, my assistant minister and I went to visit their home. Ruth was conveniently away. This gave Jack an opportunity to be relaxed and gave us freedom to visit. A struggle was imminent and sometimes it is easier when men can talk together—man to man.

Just how the Holy Spirit turned the conversation to tobacco, I do not recall. To Jack, tobacco seemed to be the symbol of his defeated life. Jack wanted victory. He told us that he had tried to quit smoking on his own, but it hadn't worked. He was almost desperate.

Lovely Lord of the Lord's Day

We talked about a number of things, because often tobacco and its problems are only indications of other problems. We wanted Jack first to come to an understanding of who Jesus is and the power He stands ready to give us. So often there is such a separation—such a gulf between the soul and the Healer of souls.

Christ promised, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." And with Nehemiah we could cry out, "Thou, even thou, art Lord alone: thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are herein, the seas, and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee."

If Jack Nyder could be led to find this wonderful God, he could be set free, not merely from the symbol of his defeated life, but also from defeat itself. With this victory realized, would he not also worship Him who made the heavens? This was our challenge that night as we visited with Jack—to acquaint him with the Saviour.

I have discovered this in my ministry: It is possible to live so near to our Lord and be so surrendered to Him, that the Holy Spirit can guide us as He has promised. He certainly did guide us that night in Jack Nyder's home.

The first thing the Holy Spirit did, as I recall the incident, was to place a deep love in my heart for Jack Nyder. He filled me with an intense desire to see Jack saved—delivered! And when the Holy Spirit works in the heart of one of His ambassadors, be it a minister or a consecrated layman, and works in the heart of the one needing deliverance, something is bound to happen. And we were not disappointed. There was a tremendous struggle, but victory was won.

When we got down to grips with Jack, we discovered his real problem. He was looking to his own weakness instead of to the power of the One who made the heavens, who turned the water into wine, who raised the dead to life, who fed the five thousand, who stilled the roaring waves, who showed throughout His earthly ministry that He was God, the Creator of the world, the One whom the Scriptures declares "was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not." John 1:10.

Jack was like the disciples on tempestuous Galilee. They tried in their own power to save themselves. They applied their own skills. They applied every human effort, when all they needed to do was to call, in faith, on One right in the boat. He was ready and able to help them. He was Master of the sea and the wind; He had made them. He could speak to the mighty storm. "Peace, be still," Mark 4:29, for He is Master of earth, sea, and sky.

That night Jack Nyder met this Jesus. He learned that it is not "by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit" Zechariah 4:6, that victory is won. This was a new realization; a new concept to him. He needed to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved from sin, including tobacco.

How did we know this is what Jack needed? By the way he answered the questions we asked. Every time we spoke of what God had promised, Jack would counter with, "I can't promise," or "I am not going to tell you I can," and so on.

It was quite a while before Jack saw that we did not want to hear him promise anything, but simply to have him understand the many things God was promising him. Then the light began to shine in his understanding.

Lovely Lord of the Lord's Day

"Don't promise me anything," I begged repeatedly, looking intently into Jack Nyder's eyes, "just look at what Jesus has promised you! He promises salvation, victory, and eternal life."

We shared with him some of these mighty Bible promises. One by one they found their way into his heart. But it was dark, and it took a while for him to see the light in its beauty.

I knew something of the struggle that was going on in Jack's heart. I knew he desperately wanted victory. I knew this was the hour and prayed that God would give me wisdom and understanding on how to proceed. The more Jack protested, the more I prayed. The more he doubted, the more I held on. He equated salvation with victory over tobacco. God promises both!

I believe we must have been in soul labor with him for fully two hours before the light dawned in his conscious mind.

"If you go back to smoking immediately, Jack," I said, "we shall not blame you. We have not come to ask you to manifest your strength, but for God to demonstrate His power." We shared several thrilling experiences of victory with Jack. Finally it dawned on him that "power belongeth unto God." Psalm 62:11.

We had been fulfilling God's own command. "They shall . . . talk of thy power." Psalm 145:11.

As I watched the struggle go on, I feared that perhaps Jack was fainting under his own inability to gain victory. But "he giveth power to the faint." Does not the Son of God declare also, "All power is given unto me?" Matthew 28:18.

"His word was with power" to those who received Him in faith. As we continued steadfastly to help this man take hold of God and to let go of self, we sensed that the power of the Lord was present.

Jack was yet to be amazed at the mighty power of God. We continued to press the battle. We recognized that light was getting through to Jack's longing, if darkened, soul. Had not Jesus declared we could be "endued with power from on high" Luke 24:49.

After a lengthy battle with the "prince of this world," we saw this man delivered "from the power of Satan unto God." Acts 26:18.

The apostle Paul freely speaks of the source of this power to save. Said he, "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead: so that they are without excuse:" Romans 1:20.

Before the visit was over, we saw the "excellency of the power" which was "of God." 2 Corinthians 4:7.

Jack knelt in prayer with no promise of his own, no power of his own, no strength of his own. Together the three of us reached out for the exceeding greatness of His power. Jack Nyder was at that golden hour, delivered "from the power of darkness" Colossians 1:13, to "the power of an endless life." Hebrews 7:16. He was a new creature in Christ Jesus.

Lovely Lord of the Lord's Day

This is wonderful, but not new. This power was the same as manifested at Creation when God spoke and it was done." Psalm 33:6. It has been in continuous evidence ever since, for God is "upholding all things by the word of his power." Hebrews 1:3. Contrast, if you will, this great omnipotent power with the power of a creature that perishes:

"Thus shall ye say unto them, The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens." Jeremiah 10:11.

When the eyes of Jack's understanding were opened to receive this precious gift of victory from our wonderful Saviour, we suggested: "Jack, you may recall how Jesus stated that if our faith were even as large as a tiny grain of mustard seed, we could expect to have Him remove any mountain of difficulty. What would you think if, as a token of your mustard seed of faith, you brought your tobacco out here in this room and placed it before us as we dedicate ourselves to God and give this thing to Him?"

I quickly hastened to add, "And brother, if you smoke within fifteen minutes after we're gone, we shall not criticize nor condemn you. We are merely making this suggestion so that what we do will be pleasing to God. 'But without faith it is impossible to please him.'" Hebrews 11:6.

With the faith and confidence of a little child, and now fully depending on God and not on self, Jack slipped into the other room, gathered his tobacco together, and put it all in a paper sack. He brought it back to where we were seated in his living room, and we knelt around it to pray.

As we took hold of God's all-powerful Word, the Holy Spirit was present, and the miracle of grace was accomplished. God has truly delivered Jack from the thing for which he was "all [his] lifetime subject to bondage." Hebrews 2:15.

We took the little sack of tobacco home with us. I forgot it and left it in my car overnight. The next morning when I went to the car. I smelled something that nearly forced me out of the car! I opened the sack and exclaimed. "I think this is the foulest tobacco I've ever smelled!" It seemed as though the devils had entered into that tobacco just as they had the swine that Jesus permitted them to enter long ago. Read the story in Mark 5.

A few weeks later Jack Nyder was baptized into God's family and united in fellowship with the church. You can imagine the real joy in the life of Ruth Nyder, his praying, believing mate!

How wonderful it is to see victories like this take place. What a God we worship! Of Him it is said, He is "Lord alone." He "made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein." Nehemiah 9:6. And as "the host of heaven worshippeth thee" because He is Creator, so we also "remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy." Exodus 20:8, for the making of the Sabbath was His concluding creative act on Creation week. We therefore keep the Sabbath in token of our faith and confidence in Him and His creative power at work in our lives today.

This powerful God stands ready to save us and to rebuke any habit to which we may find ourselves a slave. Let us trust Him to make us victorious. He has never failed; He will not fail you or me! And let us not forget that what happened in Jack Nyder's home that night was but a harvest of Ruth Nyder's quiet, unpressuring, but prayerful, consistent life. She sowed the seed. We reaped the harvest.

Lovely Lord of the Lord's Day

Dear Lord, You have said that You have given to everyone his work. Help me, I pray, not to be so farsighted that I lose the sense of a loving prayerful mission to those within my home. I pray that I shall not be an offensive or preaching spouse, but your quiet, loving child so that those dearest and nearest to me shall find Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour too. I thank You that Jesus has promised of the Holy Spirit that "He will guide you into all truth." John 16:13. I ask believingly and thank You triumphantly in the precious name of Your Son Jesus Christ, my Lord. Amen.

Reflection: Whether with another praying together or in a prayer group you may find a divine pressure prevailing your association as you try to reconstruct in your thinking many of the scriptures used in this chapter. Do not hesitate to turn to them repeatedly. Remember, "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17).

Seven Great Bible Facts:

1. The Lord "that maketh all things" named Cyrus, King of Persia, giving him a mission to perform, some one hundred years before his birth. (Isaiah 44:24, 28).
2. So "the Son of man" gives "to every man his work." (Mark 13:34).
3. But our Lord does not leave man alone to perform his mission, for we are "workers together with him." (2 Corinthians 6:1).
4. It is important, in fulfilling our mission, to understand that we must not assume the responsibilities of the Holy Spirit, one of which is to convict of sin. "And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: " John 16:8.
5. Instead of our "pushing" others to do right, our part is to unite in a sacred "courtship" which leads others to desire the Lord who is ours. "We love him, because he first loved us." 1 John 4:19.
6. Then our prayers become powerful: "Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Matthew 18:19, 20; "If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death." 1 John 5:16.
7. The Spirit-laden, creative word of our Lord brings about the new birth. "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." I Peter 1:23; "Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." John 3:5: "By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast." Psalm 33:6, 9.