

What Have They Seen In Thy House?



Kerascoet, (Nevez), July 2007, Own work, Author: Guido Gerding)

Wide Walls

*Give me wide walls to build my house of Life---
The North shall be of Love, against the winds of fate;
The South of Tolerance, that I may outreach hate;
The East that rises clear and new each day;
The West of Hope, that e'ndash dies a glorious way.
The threshold 'neath my feet shall be Humility;
The roof---the very sky itself---Infinity.
Give me wide walls to build my house of Life*

(Author Unknown)

Let me build my house on the Rock, God Almighty!

Dear Opal,

During early summer when the honey suckle vines were dripping with yellow succulent blossoms that filled the air with their sweet aroma and the fish were biting in the streams, all seemed at peace on the little farm located not far from Piney River.

Without doubt, as per usual, the old ice cream freezer would soon make its appearance along with a used burlap feed sack that was filled with a hunk of ice ready to be crushed. Then, using it to pack the space all around the freezer that held the delicious concoction, salt was sprinkled on top of the ice to hurry the melting process, followed by family and friends waiting turns to crank the handle. Oh, what patience it took to cool one's heels until the soft ice cream that would soon be spooned out and relished by everyone was frozen to perfection.

Since this was considered as a time of fellowship among these special people, it was also very common to witness the men turning the handles on as many as a half a dozen freezers, each containing a different flavor; a situation that made it very difficult for a little girl to choose. Would it be vanilla, fresh peach, or ripe strawberry? Of course, if you really wanted to be daring, a piece of devil's food cake could be crumbled in the vanilla flavor as a way of creating a special new recipe. Then, eating it too fast, many of the little ones would hold their heads due to what was labeled as a "brain freeze that followed." No matter, it was simply such a delectable treat that the same suffering would occur each time.

Of course, the only thing that would make it even a greater thrill would be to suddenly hear the sound of a pick-up truck coming down the hill that carried our favorite relatives, meaning, none other than our Aunt Mary and Uncle Clarence.

Having parked on the road adjacent to the front yard, it was such a treat to see Aunt Mary bounce out of the truck wearing a smile that reached all the way to her ears as her arms were laden with delicious cakes and pies lovingly made in her own kitchen. With her twinkling blue eyes, she would join the group wearing a flowery print dress that matched her sunshine filled personality.

Additionally, at the close of the wonderful evening, as usual, she would invite my sisters and I to crawl in the back of the truck and spend a few days on her farm.

Oh, joy! Absolutely everyone loved to visit her abode because of feeling so incredibly treasured.

You see, no matter who arrived at her farm, she would throw the screen door wide open to the kitchen and quickly walk toward her front gate shouting a jolly greeting. Never can I recall anything from her but peace and love. Literally everyone had a place to put his feet under her table that was full to overflowing with a banquet to behold concocted with fruits, vegetables, and meat right from their own farm. "Farm to Table" was simply the usual fare that was offered to one and all along with sacks packed to overflowing with garden stuff as gifts for departing guests.

Certainly, the behavior witnessed in her home was an inspiration that would always be esteemed as a model to use for all eternity; one whose wide walls were built on Christ the Solid Rock. As a Believer in Jesus, his reflection radiated on her countenance to the point that her face seemed to literally glow.

Thus, the Scripture that best fit her was from Psalm 121: 1, *"I lift up my eyes to the hills---where does my help come from? My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth, indeed, he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep."*

Opal, my aunt and uncle's behavior did not happen by accident, but because they went to their Father for daily manna; a truism that came to light through listening to the words of their children and grandchildren. When remembering them at a reunion, they told of hearing the two sweet souls rise early each morning and kneel in front of the living room windows that looked out on the valley and pray together. The memory of their precious voices in prayer will forever be imprinted on their children and handed down from generation to generation; all because that is what they had heard and seen in this house.

Since the first thing written on this letter was a Scripture from 2 Kings 20:15 that reads, *"What have they seen in thy house?"*, it is my hope that you will be captivated by it as much as I. This particular verse caught my attention so much that it led me down a road of deep contemplation, one that prompted me to discover the answer from a sermon written by J. Wilbur Chapman in 1859 titled, "AN OLD-FASHIONED HOME". Even though it was penned by him one hundred and sixty-one years ago, his message remains current today. His opening

paragraph is as follows: ***“If you will tell me what is in your house by your own choice, I will tell you the story of your home life and will be able to inform you whether yours is a home in which there is harmony and peace or confusion and despair. Let me read the names of the guests in your guest book, allow me to study the titles of the books in your library in which you have special delight, permit me to scan your magazines which you particularly choose, allow me to listen to your conversation when you do not know that you are being overheard, give me the privilege of talking but for a moment to your servants and make it possible for me to visit with your friends in whom you have particular delight, and I will write a true story of what you have been of what you are and of what you will be but for the grace of God, even though I may not know you personally at all. In other words, whatever may be seen in your home determines what your home is.”***

Chapman continued by making no differentiation between the rich and poor with the following stipulation regarding the foundation for a home with the statement, **“The greatest need of the American Nation today is homes. Not palatial buildings of necessity, but homes where Christ is honored, where God is loved and where the Bible is studied.”**

Continuing, he said, **“Wherever this is not true, there is some cause for great alarm, for in proportion as the home fails the Nation is in danger.”**

Opal, being captivated by the many examples he used of situations where parents accepted responsibility for raising their children in this type of atmosphere, there was absolutely no difference between the building blocks for a home’s foundation then or now; that being where God is the source, generations will follow suit.

Simply stated, parents that **accept the responsibility** for raising children will not only do just that, but also **provide an example or role model** that will be handed down to all the households that follow.

At this point, emphasis needs to be placed on the plight of parents that have followed Christian principles when raising their children but still experienced a lack of success. For reasons only known by the Lord, sometimes a child chooses to make wrong decisions that drag him/her down into the under belly of the dark

world, refusing to accept help or guidance from anyone. Sadly enough, the only solution is to place the outcome into the hands of the Lord.

Although there are great examples of wonderful parents that are raising their children in a Christian home where prayer and reading the Bible are at the core of each day, unfortunately there are equal numbers of stories told that show just the opposite approach, one that is fostering confused children that have been set adrift on the ocean of life for most of their formative years and one that propagates the same behavior generation after generation, a pattern that is labeled as a “poverty cycle” in society.

Thus, it is with this in mind that I would like to tell you about a young man that fits this description and finds himself now having to face life without the parental guidance he needs. Finding himself without the basics for 18 years, (a safe place, food, clothing, love, role models), he grew up simply trying to survive.

Actually, the only thing he has to lean on at his ripe old age of 18, is the unconditional love his grandparents showered him with day in and day out. Since his parents chose the things of this world over him, he was often delivered to his grandparents’ house for long periods at a time. Had they been the legal guardians, much more guidance could have been accomplished. Simply stated, they had responsibility without authority.

Still, trying their best, they not only provided the basics that were lacking at home, but also read Scripture, made up creative ways to place his name into story time, were actively involved in games, served him his favorite recipes and provided such a wonderful role model of an old-fashioned home that it serves today as the only solid training this young man holds dear. Simply stated, it is his rock. So much that he literally calls their house, his home.

However, the failure of his parents to care for him, haunts him unmercifully with a tremendous force. He still cannot understand why he was not loved by them, thus, continues down the path desiring their approval. Instead of supporting him, they still never cease to hinder his growth through abandonment, disappointments, and poor choices.

Given this background, it is now time to hear the following story of how he is dealing with the challenges as he readies himself to launch into the world as an

adult. Here now a tender happening that just occurred at his recent graduation commencement ceremony titled, “Bouquet of Tears”, that will touch your heart and bring a tear to the eye; a recount of the situation shared with his grandmother after the fact.



Opal, do you recall how important it is for teenagers to be accepted by their peers? Goodness only knows what will result if a young person is placed in a position to stand out from the crowd. Because of this, behaviors teachers often have to counteract among their students are teasing, ostracizing, and even the act of cruel bullying toward one another, all true in this young man's situation.

Thus, after having completed a graduation practice session at the football stadium the evening before the ceremony, instructions were delivered that at its

conclusion, the students would be invited to hand a flower to a person/s that had been special in their lives. Realizing the acceptable flower would be that of a single red rose, the young man asked his father if he would help him purchase two flowers, one for his mother, he **hoped** would attend, and the other for his grandmother, he **knew** would be present. Unfortunately, using a cruel tone, the reply was, "Let the school buy them for you!"

Opal, are you picturing at this point the thoughts that roughly romped through the mind of this young man as he rode with his grandparents to the graduation ceremony?

Thus, upon arrival, all attendees observed the front of the speakers platform being lined with an array of red roses that were hand delivered by the students just prior to lining up outside for the march forward.

Consequently, finding himself in desperate straits, this bewildered young man's eyes wildly scanned the perimeter of the outside of the football field searching for a possible solution to his embarrassing predicament. As luck would have it, he spotted a large rose of sharon bush whose branches, loaded with blooms, were hanging over the fence onto school property.

Wasting no time, he quickly broke off two small branches containing flowers and **discreetly** nestled them among the red blanket of roses that served a beautiful border for the onlookers.

Then, when the tender moment arrived, he dashed quickly to his hidden spot, clutched the two unusual bouquets and presented one to both his mother and grandmother.

Opal, the rose of sharon flowers in the vase pictured above were those presented to his grandmother, a special bouquet that she will press between the pages of a Bible that will be left behind for her grandson, along with note of love that he can treasure forever.

As adults, our viewpoint of this bouquet will be quite different from that of a young man that just wants to belong. Although we probably will think the beauty and creativity of this bouquet to far exceed that of any hothouse flower, a young man searching for a place to be included will feel differently.

After receiving this photograph and being aware of the pain and suffering he had endured during eighteen short years on the journey of his life, it took several days for the tears to stop running down this writer's cheeks, all because of the symbolism it represented. Here is the sad story of a young man that only wanted to be special and loved by both parents, but knew in his heart of hearts that it was not to be. Why had both his parents chosen worldly pleasures over him?

The Little Chap Who Follows Me!

***A careful man I want to be;
A little fellow follows me.
I do not dare to go astray
For fear he'll go the self-same way.***

***I cannot once escape his eyes,
Whate'er he sees me do, he tries.
Like me he says he's going to be;
The little chap who follows me.***

***He thinks that I'm so very fine,
Believes in every word of mine.
The base in me he must not see;
The little chap who follows me.***

***I must remember as I go
Through summer's sun and winter's snow,
I'm building for the years to be;
The little chap who follows me.***



Author: James Gibbon

(A poignant poem that meant nothing to either his mother or his father. Instead, only wasted lives filled with mistakes, bad choices and empty promises took precedent over a little chap.)

As a closing today, it is important to ask one and all that read or listen to this letter to pause and send prayers for this special young man to the throne of God. At this point, the mighty hand of the Almighty is the only source of comfort, healing and hope that has the power to erase the indelible wounds that have injured his emotional well being.

Opal, realizing the great faith you have shown all your life, will you pause at this moment and pray for this young man? Additionally, if you would ask your reader and roommate to do the same each day, it would be a magnificent gift of love for a downtrodden person that is trying to navigate the storms of life without a sound foundation.

Matthew 10: 27

Jesus looked at them and said, "With man it is impossible, but not with God. For all things are possible with God." Amen!



Love,

Colene