

A Memorable Spiritual Event From Many Decades Ago



When I was just a child of 4 or 5 years old, an interesting event in my life occurred. I was invited to a church by my Norwegian neighbors. My parents were Catholic but the neighbors were not. I am not really sure what denomination they were, but it was some protestant denomination. My parents did not go along with me to that church. I went with the neighbors. Their names were Olaf and Lillian Knutsen and they had two boys, Olaf and Ralph, or Ralphie as I called him. The older of their two sons was named Olaf (Olaf Jr I assume) and he was my age and in my grade in school. Ralphie was about a year or two younger. Two very special things happened to me at this church. Primarily, I was invited because Mr. Knutsen was a carpenter - and that particular day, the church was allowing the boys, myself included, to build tool tote boxes out of pieces of wood that someone, perhaps Mr. Knutsen, had cut up ahead of time. So armed with hammers and a few nails, we assembled our tote boxes, which I kept for many years and for some reason passed the box on to someone a few years ago (and a few moves ago).

Now my story does not end there. Something else happened that day that seemed to get lost in my memory until later on in life when I became born-again by the Holy Spirit. I recall people (the adults in the church) standing in a circle around us children, praying. Were they praying for my salvation? I do not know. Their younger son Ralph grew up and became a pastor. The family actually moved from America back to Norway when the two boys graduated from high school. I still have fond memories of those days but also some sad memories because Olaf Jr. was a wonderful friend to me and I had to move away when I was about 8 years old and finishing up third grade. We did not really keep in touch so my friendship with Olaf pretty much dissolved. I did meet up with Olaf in high school - six years later - where we both attended the same regional high school. However, by then, Olaf and I were heading in different directions in life and had acquired a different set of friends. Suffice it to say, my friends in high school were not the best influence for me. However, in God's perfect timing, I heard some serious gospel preaching, preaching that included not only the "good news" of salvation in Jesus Christ by His merits alone, but also the reason we need the good news, which is because of the "bad news": eternal separation from God in hell, due to our sins making us totally unfit for eternal fellowship with a thrice-holy God. And we are ALL unfit for heaven, until and unless we seek forgiveness for our sins from the ONLY sin-bearer capable of blotting out ALL our iniquities, as so wonderfully stated by the prophet Isaiah:

1 Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?

2 For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.

3 **He is despised and rejected of men;** a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

4 Surely **he hath borne our griefs,** and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

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.**

6 All **we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.**

7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

8 He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.

9 And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.

10 Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when **thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin,** he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.

11 He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.

12 Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because **he hath poured out his soul unto death:** and he was numbered with the transgressors; and **he bare the sin of many,** and made intercession for the transgressors. - Isaiah 53:1-12

— RM Kane
