

When You Hear His Voice, Obey

Tom Stephens

This true story took place in the Fall of 2005. Names are omitted to protect the privacy of those involved.

He was just one more probationer who hadn't reported or made his payments. I had already filed a motion to revoke his probation and issued an arrest warrant when his mother came to see me.

Though she was very polite and cordial, the stress she was under was obvious. It was not so much because there was an arrest warrant out for her son, but more because her son was in desperate need physically. She told me he was in the hospital, suffering not only from diabetes but also from a large ulcer in his stomach. His condition was critical. The doctor had told her the ulcer was "the worst he had ever seen" and was draining into the abdominal cavity. The prognosis was not good. The doctors were still running tests but they did not hold out much hope for their patient surviving.

I assured her I would immediately dismiss the warrant, but listening to this "bad dream" story had stirred my heart and I began to question her about her son's spiritual condition.

"He is not saved," she said. "He's not living for the Lord. We're praying for him."

She went on to explain that most of the family were saved and attending an Assembly of God Church in a nearby community.

Realizing the family had a pentecostal background, I knew God must be anointing this situation because everything was already set up for me!

Over time I had learned most of the Hispanic population in the area were Roman Catholic and marveled God's Holy Spirit was obviously opening a door for me to minister to this precious lady.

We talked for a few minutes about the goodness of God and His provision for His own people. As she turned to go, I asked if I might walk with her to her car where we could pray for her son.

Her husband and her son's two children were waiting in the car. After introductions, we joined hands and agreed in prayer for a positive outcome for their son. We even prayed if the worst must happen, the Lord would make a way to save the man's soul before it was too late.

Over the next few months, I would pray for him each time he came to my mind. As November turned to December, it seemed the Lord released me from praying for him. I had heard nothing else from his mother – I didn't know if he was alive or dead. I wondered if I had failed him by not going to the hospital to see him and pray with him in person.

I was concerned I may have lost an opportunity to lead a soul to Christ. No one had to tell me how serious a mistake this could be. His blood would be on my hands and the enemy would have snatched a soul right out from under my nose!

Then one day, his mother came by the office.

She walked in, followed by her son. They both looked weary and I could tell he still had a ways to go to full recovery.

I welcomed them excitedly.

With tears running down their faces, they told me how the ulcers were healed up with no unseen complications. The surgery had gone fine but best of all, the young man had accepted Jesus into his heart! He told me he was determined to serve God with his whole heart.

“If it weren’t for your love and prayers, I would not have made it through this thing,” he said.

“Yes,” echoed his mother. “The doctor, staff and you, Tom, are our angels. I was in shock the day you walked me to the car and we prayed. I told my pastor about you and he told me he never knew a probation officer who would pray with his probationers, especially right out there under the open sky.”

Though we all knew who was really responsible for that miraculous healing and salvation, I just couldn’t let them leave without first getting huge hugs from them both.

They walked out of my office, not realizing the powerful witness they had been to me that day. The day was sealed; everything was filtered by the Father and poured out by the precious Holy Spirit. The Lord had visited me. I was full of joy in the Holy Ghost, ministering to the Lord under my breath in Holy tongues.

Was it my prayer that made the difference? I’ll never know this side of heaven and it really doesn’t matter. I only know when we obey what God tells us to do, we’ll never go wrong.

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