

# *Teen Challenge Chapel*

Tom Stephens

It was a typical Saturday night for those of us who worked with Teen Challenge. Each week we drove the 30 or so miles to Dallas and gathered at the chapel. It was good training for aspiring ministers and others who just wanted an opportunity to witness. Usually some of us would go to the bus station, some to the airport, some to areas that were pretty rough—just about anywhere there were people you might find us looking for those we could lead to the Lord. We were young and enthusiastic and we trusted God to take care of us.

That night, it was just past 8 p.m and the building was full. Most of us were students from Southwestern A/G College—now a University at Waxahachie.

The meeting, like all others, began with a short devotional from our director. Soon the message was through, and the praying began. Usually this was a brief time before we left the chapel for the streets. But this night was different. Something was wrong. God wasn't ready for us to go out on the street so He began to speak to us through messages in tongues and interpretation. Like the churches of Revelation, the Lord had somewhat against us. We had allowed our feelings and the cares of this world to come in and over-shadow our burden for souls. And the Spirit was grieved.

The Lord told us there was no unity among us. He told us our hearts were not pure and there was enmity in our midst and instructed us to remain right where we were, in this chapel, until we had received forgiveness and blessing from Him. This message was given two times.

Time passed by. Still the Spirit would not release us. Then, finally, young men and women began moving from their pews. It was time for confession. Time to ask forgiveness of one another. The Spirit would not settle for less. Tears began to fall as the Spirit of Love and Forgiveness penetrated each person. Many had fallen on their faces before God in repentance. It would have looked like total confusion to the world. But to us, His children, it was the arms of the Lord reaching out drawing us to Him.

The third message from the Lord was one of blessing and encouragement.

. The hour was now late, much too late to minister on the streets. So we remained in our seats, just soaking in the sweetness of the Spirit. You've known His presence this way. It's like the powerful moving of the Spirit in revival. When it's all done, you just don't want to leave. You want to continue feasting on the awesome Holy presence of the Lord.

Then quite unexpectedly, a man entered the front door of the church and began walking toward the front. He was clad in worn and dirty clothing, unshaven, smelly. He was met in the aisle by our minister. The man confessed he was lost and miserable. He did not know if he had any hope, but was asking for our prayers. That man left there that night saved and delivered from alcoholism, and full of the joy of the Lord. Before he left another, much younger man entered the double doors. Before this person could say a thing, the Lord showed me he was on drugs. I asked,

“*What drug are you on?*” He named two drugs, one being marijuana.

“*Do you want deliverance from these drugs?*” I knew if he responded positively, Jesus would save him the same night, delivering him from the two drugs—and any other problems; for there is nothing our God cannot do.

Weeping, he said,

“*yes, please help me find Jesus. I am miserable and wanted to die!*” That night he was gloriously saved by the power of God.

Two other unsaved people, recent admissions to the Teen Challenge Center were present in this service. One was a youth in his mid teens. The other was an elderly alcoholic gentleman who lived at the center because he was sick and had no one else, nor any other place to live. Both had consistently resisted coming to the Lord before this night. One was delivered from alcoholism. The other had been tormented by evil spirits. Four saved and delivered from the desires of the world—all within minutes of each other!

The air was electric. The Holy Spirit had accomplished what no man could accomplish.

When we could not go out on the streets, God brought the streets to us, but only when our hearts were pure and right before Him.

That evening, all who were in the sanctuary saw Jesus with new revelation. By cautioning us and embracing us in His lovely arms, He was showing us how He adored us—keeping us out of dangerous areas of the city of Dallas when we were not prepared by His Spirit. We learned that we must seek His face before we can face the enemy on his dark turf.

Jesus told us when we brought a gift to the altar, if anyone had anything against us, we must seek forgiveness before our gift would be accepted (Matt. 5:23). Perhaps there are times when the same is true of our witness. Before it can truly be effective, there must be nothing between us and our fellow man that hinders the move of God.

This was a night and a lesson most of us there will never forget. It was the night we learned God loved us enough *not* to let us go out on the streets with anything in the way. It was also the night we truly learned “*if He restricts from leaving His Sanctuary*”, *He will bring those who are hungry in to us*.

Blessings From:

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