

“It’s Not About Me!”

Compiled by Paul R. Blake

What follows are three short articles that all proclaim the same message: “It’s not about me.” Until professed Christians mature to the point that they put the wellbeing of others above their own, they will not manifest the spirit of Christ, Who loved us and gave Himself for us. We cannot insist on our comfort or rights, and uphold the weak at the same time. We cannot rescue the perishing from a recliner. Instead of leading the young in the Way, we are too busy insisting on having our way. We delude ourselves into thinking we are carrying our cross when in reality we are just sitting on our couch. Too many on the church roster are going to stand before the Lord in Judgment and start to say, “I attended three times each week, I gave, sang, communed and prayed every week. I...” At which time the Lord will interrupt and say, “It wasn’t about you; it was about all those souls I sent to you for help. What did you give up for them?”

Who Pays When I Sin?

Somewhere in the west Texas desert a "No Trespassing" sign is posted that gives a solemn warning: "STOP. I know you're thinking about crossing this gate. What you should know is that if the Coyotes, Cactus, Mesquite, Heat, Dust, and Rattlesnakes don't get you, I will." At the bottom of the sign is the rancher's name signed in blood red paint.

Just like this sign, Jesus cautioned us to "count the cost." " For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it" (Luke 14:28). What is the cost of sin? Who pays when I sin?

I pay with my soul. "The soul who sins shall die" (Ez. 18:20).

My family pays by enduring my bad influence and shame that comes with it.

My brethren do by means of my discouraging example and an increased work load.

My Lord does: "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame" (Heb. 6:4-6).

May I never be so completely selfish as to say “It’s my life; I’ll do with it whatever I want!”
(prb)

Big Tom & Little Timmy

In 1872 in the town of Caruthersville, Missouri, there was a school with a class of students that no teacher had been able to handle. Two or three teachers had been run off from this school in one year by the unruly students. A young man, just out of college, heard about the class and applied to the school. The principal asked the young man, "Do you know what you are asking for? No one else has been able to handle these students." The young man looked at the principal and said, "Sir, with your consent I accept the challenge. Just give me a trial basis."

The next morning the young man stood before the class. He said to the class, "Young people, I came here today to conduct school. But I realize I can't do it by myself. I must have your help." One big boy, they called Big Tom, in the back of the room whispered to his buddies, "I won't need any help. I can lick that little bird all by myself." The young teacher told the class that if they were to have school, there would have to be some rules to go by. But he also added that he would allow the students to make up the rules and that he would list them on the blackboard.

This was certainly different, the students thought! One young man suggested "NO STEALING." Another one shouted "BE ON TIME FOR CLASS." Pretty soon they had 10 rules listed on the board. The teacher then asked the class what the punishment should be for breaking these rules. "Rules are no good unless they are enforced," he said.

Someone in the class suggested that if the rules were broken, they should receive 10 licks with a rod across their back with their coat off. The teacher thought that this was pretty harsh, so he asked the class if they would stand by this punishment. The class agreed.

Everything went along pretty good for two or three days. Then Big Tom came in one day very upset. He declared that someone had stolen his lunch. After talking with the students, they came to the conclusion that little Timmy had stolen Big Tom's lunch; someone had seen little Timmy with Big Tom's lunch! The teacher called little Timmy up to the front of the room. Little Timmy admitted he had taken Big Tom's lunch.

So the teacher asked him, "Do you know the punishment?" Little Timmy nodded that he did. "You must remove your coat," the teacher instructed. The little fellow had come with a great big coat on.

Little Timmy said to the teacher, "I am guilty and I am willing to take my punishment, but please don't make me take off my coat." The teacher reminded little Timmy of the rules and punishments and again told him he must remove his coat and take his punishment like a man.

The little fellow started to unbutton that old coat. As he did so, the teacher saw he did not have a shirt on under the coat. And even worse, he saw a frail and bony frame hidden beneath that coat. The teacher asked little Timmy why he had come to school without a shirt on.

Little Timmy replied, "My daddy's dead and my mother is very poor. I don't have but one shirt, and my mother is washing it today. I wore my big brother's coat so that I could keep warm."

That young teacher stood and looked at the frail back with the spine protruding against the skin, and his ribs sticking out. He wondered how he could lay a rod on that little back and without even a shirt on. Still, he knew he must enforce the punishment or the children would not obey the rules. So he drew back to strike little Timmy.

Just then Big Tom stood up and came down the aisle. He asked, "Is there anything in the rules that says that I can't take little Timmy's whipping for him?"

The teacher thought about it and agreed. With that Big Tom took his coat off and stooped and stood over little Timmy at the desk. The teacher began to lay the rod on Tom's big back. After the whipping, he heard a commotion and looked up to find not even one dry eye in the room. Little Timmy had turned and grabbed Big Tom around the neck apologizing to him for stealing his lunch, begging Big Tom to forgive him, and promising that he would love him till the day he died for taking his whipping for him. (Author Unknown)

Aren't you glad that Jesus took our whipping for us? "For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:6-8).

Not a One!

Little Chad was a shy, quiet young man. One day he came home and told his mother that he'd like to make a valentine for everyone in his class. Her heart sank. She thought, "I wish he wouldn't do that!" because she had watched the children when they walked home from school. Her Chad was always behind them. They laughed and hung on to each other and talked to each other. But Chad was never included. Nevertheless, she decided she would go along with her son. So she purchased the paper and glue and crayons. For three weeks, night after night, Chad painstakingly made 35 valentines.

Valentine's Day dawned, and Chad was beside himself with excitement. He carefully stacked them up, put them in a bag, and bolted out the door. His mother decided to bake him his favorite cookies and serve them nice and warm with a cool glass of milk when he came home from school. She just knew he would be disappointed, and maybe that would ease the pain a little. It hurt her to think that he wouldn't get many valentines--maybe none at all.

That afternoon she had the cookies and milk on the table. When she heard the children outside, she looked out the window. Sure enough, there they came, laughing and having the best time. And, as always, there was Chad in the rear. He walked a little faster than usual. She fully expected him to burst into tears as soon as he got inside. His hands were empty, she noticed, and when the door opened she choked back the tears. "Mommy has some cookies and milk for you," she said.

But he hardly heard her words. He just marched right on by, his face aglow, and all he could do was shake his head and say: "Not a one. Not a one." Her heart sank.

And then he added with joy, "I didn't forget a one, not a single one!" (Author Unknown)
(Say it out loud: "It's not about me!" -- prb)