

For God So Loved the World

The gravel crunched loudly beneath our tires as we backed our band trailer past the lines of Harleys up to the stage door, yet all I could hear was that little man in my head with a megaphone roaring, “This is Crazy! What are you doing back here?”

My band mates seemed so calm, even collected. I quickly surmised that they were either well prayed up, or blissfully ignorant of the absurdity of what was about to take place. In either case, I struggled to get my nerves and erratic breathing under control. It was the least I could do as their fearless leader.

At the door we were smacked by a wall of cigarette smoke, lapping hungrily for a place to disperse. The music was loud, punctuated with gruff voices, laughter, and the occasional crash of a beer bottle.

“Hey look, it’s Diesel Jane!” the doorman exclaimed. Various members of rival biker gangs turned to grunt or nod. Gripping my shoulder with one big tattooed arm, he shook my hand with the other and cracked a big yellow smile like we were long lost family.

“We ain’t seen you fellows in a coon’s age. Ya’ll gon’ jam ain’t ya. Shucks, grab yourselves a beer!”

I just smiled. He was right. It did seem like a long time since we’d been a regular band in this old metal building that doubled as a bait shop during the day. I couldn’t help wondering how he’d respond once he realized we were no longer bringing the ‘Diesel Jane’ party train. We were hauling a new trailer now, and our new name SoulFood was emblazoned across it, along with the words ‘Ushering Hungry Hearts to the Throne of God.’ Yep, a whole lot had happened in the last year.

Due to a cancellation we were rushed up on stage early. Reluctant to skip our group prayer time, we briefly huddled at center stage. I don’t recall the exact prayer, but it must have been something like, “HELP!” I have no doubt we’d have settled for a roll of chicken wire for the front of the stage.

Fueled by pure adrenaline, we tore out our first song like a nuclear powered locomotive. If there’s one thing the Lord had trained us to do, it was to jam, and by the power of His Holy Spirit we took absolute command of that stage, nearly rocking it off its foundations. We were three songs in before any of them realized they were being blow-torched with the fire of God’s praise. It was like nothing I’d ever seen. By the middle of the set the whole place was lifting their beers and shouting Hallelujah with us! I won’t swear they knew what it meant though, for not long after, they also filled the floor to slow dance to a worship song.

Toward the end, at the risk of a venomous heckling, or worse, I whipped out my old King James Bible. To my surprise, you could have heard a pin drop. They set their bottles down and listened quietly as I read the Words of Jesus. (*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, Luke 4:18 KJV*)

I closed the Bible and simply added, “Jesus is still in the restoration business. He’s sent us here to tell you He still loves you. He still wants to do these things for you.”

We played one last song, and then incredibly, came off that stage to a flood of handshakes and hugs. People were literally crawling all over each other to show their appreciation. Though none had publically received Christ, I had a sneaky suspicion the seeds planted that night would soon be springing up into Eternal Life for some of them.

But anyway- Is this not a prime example of why the Gospel of Jesus Christ is not something to be hoarded, or selectively distributed? It’s not just for the church, or for Sunday mornings. It belongs to the world, wherever and whenever they may gather. No matter the current state of a person's heart, deep down they're hungry for the Good News. They are crying out for God's soul food. As believers we all have the responsibility and pleasure of ushering those hungry hearts to the throne of God.

-Guy Sheffield 2-2-07