

Tip Toeing Around the Flames

Maybe something's wrong with the VCR in my head, because certain traumatic experiences I've experienced only seem to come back to me in slow motion. Like that time at the gas pump...

It was a couple of years ago, and I was helping move my mom back from Orlando. We'd pulled into a service station and she'd gone in to use the restroom. I was just standing there, minding my business, when all of the sudden she burst through the glass doors. It was in slow motion, one frame at a time, the way I remember it. Her eyes were bugged in stark terror, both arms flagging wildly overhead. I froze in sheer panic, until the exaggerated movement of her mouth finally propelled her hysterical screams across the lot, two octaves lower than normal. "GUYYYYYY..." She bellowed, "PUT IT DOWN! PUT IT DOWN RIGHT NOW!"

Suddenly all forty seven people in the vicinity were staring at me. Gas sales came to a grinding halt. Beady little eyes everywhere peered around their pumps like a curious pack of rubber necked ground vultures.

My hands went out, my shoulders hunched in desperation. The question "What?" rose to my lips like molasses. I spun a wide swath half expecting to see somebody behind me with a gun. Nope. Had I accidentally stole something? Meanwhile that harried voice kept pounding me, "PUT IT DOWN! RIGHT NOW MISTER!" Finally some fellow looked up from packing his cooler and chimed in, "Dude, I think she's talking about your cell phone." I glanced down. Sure enough, it was still clasp in my trembling palm, where I'd been dialing home.

After that my memory reel speeds back up to normal. I recall momma stomping across that lot to scold me over the potential dangers of the incendiary tendencies inherent in the common cell phone when used within close proximity of a gasoline pump. For somebody so versed in combustion, she remained oddly oblivious to the steam rising from under my collar, or the fire that was now blazing from my eyes! As she continued to lay into me I glared at the dispersing crowd, hoping to find a non-family surrogate on which I could direct the only real explosion liable to happen. Several people wagged their heads at me, but nobody really dared to make eye contact. One young girl did purse her lips and flip her hair in disgust before hopping back in her car.

Mom finally relented from her assault and settling back to being her cheery old self- obviously pleased she'd saved my life. Me, I drove along quietly for quite a while after that, although I may have grinded twenty years off my molars doing it.

After I'd put a few hundred miles worth of thought under my belt it hit me, "What if mom was just acting in love?" I mean, how else should she respond if she truly believed I was in danger of experiencing a fiery death? Could I have expected any less? One thing's for sure, true love can often stir great emotions, and it doesn't always tip toe around conflict. Maybe it actually took great courage for her to act such a fool on my behalf.

But anyway... I guess we're sort of put in that same position as Christians. People are rejecting Christ and drawing closer to fires of hell everyday. Yet, if we warn them they might get offended. Not to mention the politically correct folks would have our lunch. They'll purse their lips and call us judgmental, religious bigots, or worse. Right now, in many places in the world, they'd have our heads! They've crucified people for that.

What should we do then? I mean, the source for our information is a little more reliable than momma's cell phone theory! Everything the Bible has ever predicted has come true. Should we just join in with this "feel good" "self help" "pick and choose" form of the Gospel we've created for ourselves here in America? It promises more comfort than an old recliner, but sadly, I fear it may also be rocking the Church to sleep.

Frankly, I don't know if my conscience will allow me to go on cheapening the blood of Christ by presenting the message of salvation like it's just some little "add on" to our real lives. Are we building a church satisfied that our Christianity bears about as much relevance to our day to day existence as the old library card in our wallet? Maybe if the world saw Christians who were as serious about God's Truth as they were about His Mercy they would apply a little more weight to their own eternal decisions. You can't have one without the other. (*He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him. John 3:36 KJV*) (*And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire. Revelations 20:15 KJV*)

Why aren't our eyes bugging in stark terror over the fact that every day many people are dying and finding this out the hard way! Church, we've got to come out of slow motion.

I hope you can forgive me for my frankness. There's just too much of Jesus' love burning in my heart for me to be tip toeing around a few little flames of persecution. People are stomping off towards the infernos of hell! Thanks for showing me how love works Mom.

-Guy Sheffield 7-2-07