

Wandering Soul, You Are Breaking Our Hearts

(By Paul R. Blake, developed in hope that his precious brother Jim will one day soon return to the fold)

Little Tommy, a precious bundle of baby, entered into the joy of his family as a blessed treasure sought through many trials. Long years his parents prayed for a child, and at last, near the end of their fruitful days, a child was coming to grace their home. It was a most difficult time for Mother, for after a dangerous and arduous birth, Little Tommy's first cry rang like music from heaven in Father's ears. And then the womb that opened once closed forever, leaving Little Tommy as the sole object of a mother's life giving love.

Little Tommy, a happy handful of boy, had an energetic spirit that yearned to explore and be free. He would climb the bookshelves pretending they were mountains; he would write on the walls pretending to be an artist; he would pull the cat's tail pretending to be a lion tamer; he would ride his bicycle in traffic pretending to be a race car driver; he would shoot his water pistol in church pretending to be a gangster. He sought to be everything but Little Tommy, a beloved child of devoted parents. They would smile indulgently at one another and said, "What a free spirit Little Tommy is."

Little Tommy, a busy boy of sixteen, yearned to explore and be free. He made his boast to his teasing teen friends that he will try anything once, and he lived up to his word. He had already explored school, and could no longer find wonder there. He had already explored his home and there was no excitement there. He had already explored the church and there were no more thrills there for him. He abandoned each as boring in his search for freedom and frolic. His mother and father, who love him to distraction, call for Little Tommy to return to the warmth of their heart. But Little Tommy is a free spirit and must fly. School, church, and home are not for an explorer like he.

Little Tommy, exciting man of 23, explored the heart of woman and married the girl of his dreams. He searched fatherhood and found to his temporary surprise three children who looked much like he. Mother and children held Little Tommy as the jewel of their lives, but Little Tommy was a free spirit and he must fly. Family, work, and faith are chains to a seeker like Little Tommy.

Little Tommy, a bored man approaching midlife, explored the darker side of himself. He had already tasted the sunshine of his parents love, the rush of energetic youth, the peak of marital joy, the thrill of learning, and the peace of faith. But Little Tommy is a free spirit and there are other things to explore. The darkness of sin may yet hold exciting mountains to climb, or lions to tame, or race cars to drive. Little Tommy will try it and see, for he is a free spirit and must fly.

Little Tommy's mother and father, wife and small children stand together in sorrow at the base of a small granite mountain. It is only four feet high, but it is the last mountain Little Tommy tried to climb. You see, he got lost on one of his explorations; lost to his family, lost to his parents, lost to his God. On the side of that little stone mountain are carved the words: "Here lies Little Tommy; he was a free spirit, and he has flown." Those who loved him weep as they walk home from the cemetery.

- B. Wandering soul or wayward Christian, your life is connected to that of many others; you do not walk alone through this life; your life touches many others.
- C. Those others care about you deeply; their labors and prayers are such that you do not die, neither your body, nor your soul.
- D. With open mind and heart will you consider three questions with us this day?

I. DO YOU REALIZE HOW PRECIOUS A PERSON YOU REALLY ARE?

- A. Many folks do not believe that they are worthy of being loved by others.
 1. Young man who asked fiancé if she was pregnant and needed a husband because he couldn't believe she loved him just for who he was.
 2. Do not believe we are worthy of love, and therefore do not believe others when they tell us that they love us.

- B. But, every single one of us is precious.
 1. *Psalm 113:5-9* - WHY?!? Because He treasures each and every one of us!
 2. *Psalm 103:10-12* - WHY?!? Because, though we may sin, we are not sin. He is able to see the difference between who we are and the mistakes we make.
 3. *Matt. 18:12-14; 2Peter 3:9* - Are you aware that God is delaying judgment for a time because of how precious every soul is to Him?
 4. *1Thes. 2:5-13* - Are you aware of how you are cherished by the church here?
- C. We need to see ourselves through the eyes of God, Jesus, and our fellow Christians. It may even hurt a little bit to see just how much others treasure our relationship with them.

II. DO YOU COMPREHEND THE DEPTH OF THE LOVE THAT IS BESTOWED ON YOU?

- A. *John 3:16-18*
 1. *Vs 16* - Depth of God's love. (Describe what God saw)
 2. *Vs 17* - Proof of God's love.
 3. *Vs 18* - What we do to ourselves if we do not believe in God's love for us.
 4. *Rom. 5:5-8; 1Tim. 1:12-16*
 5. He loves you AS you sit there rejecting him. You cannot escape his love, nor will you escape his judgment if you spurn his love.
- B. Do you know how much your fellow Christians care for you?
 1. *Rom. 9:1-3; Matt. 18:15-17* - Do you realize the lengths that the saints here would go to out of love for you?
 2. Why do faithful Christians visit you when you stray?
 - a. To torment you? Because they want your contribution?
 - b. Why do they take the risk of rejection, agonizing for days over the right words to say, taking time out of their lives to encourage the wandering soul to come home?
 - c. Why does a wife worry when her mate is late returning on an icy night?
 - d. Why does a father anguish over a child who is taking drugs.
 - e. Why does a child cry in bed at night when his parents argue?
 - f. Why do faithful Christians suffer the emotional turmoil of visiting us when we stray from God?!?
 4. Because they love us!
 5. Parents ache for years who have seen a child precede them in death.
 - a. But what of the child that is living, but is spiritually dead? Death becomes eternal separation.
 - b. When we attend the funeral of a faithful Christian, we have the faith that we will be reunited with him or her in heaven.
 - c. But saying good-bye to the wandering soul is an unending loss, sorrow that is unmatched in this world.
- C. God loves you! Jesus Christ loves you! We love you!
 1. How can you dismiss such love?

Conclusion:

- A. A tale of two boys:
 1. Prodigal son - *Luke 15:11-24*
 2. Absalom - *2Sam. 18:32-33*