

Kevin – God’s Leading – Plan 3

The time was the summer of ‘82’. I was riding my bike as I was accustomed to doing in my summer evenings. But on June 10th, I receive a challenge like no other. And as Paul Harvey would say, “And now the rest of the story.”

I left home riding my bike back to my old stomping grounds. I had moved out of my parents home about a mile and a half away. And in the summers passed, I’d ride my bike around Plan 3. Plan 3 was a lot flatter and smoother than my parents Plan, Plan 1. I rode my bike there for relaxation rather than exercise. Plan 3 used to be a farmer’s field where the cattle grazed. Plan 3 was also where I had my paper route. I carried 125 papers there for several years, before I went into the Service. So I knew the people and the neighborhood real well.

One of the games of challenge that I would play on my bike was ‘coasting’. You see, I would pedal up to the top of the Plan, then coast downward towards the bottom of the Plan. Trying to reach a farther mark than the last run. The Plan wasn’t real steep, so I tried to stream-line my body; you know, head down, knees and elbows tucked in, and hopefully with the wind; ‘Coasting’. Crawling to a stop, I would eventually have to put my foot down or fall down.

I had made several runs that evening, trying to beat my old record. I was sitting there on my bike with one foot on the ground, just resting and enjoying the cool summer breeze, when I heard the chatter of little voices off in the distance. I looked up and saw 7 to 8 children playing on and around this BIG old oak tree. This brought back memories to me when I and my friends walked out through the cow pasture to get to the Big old oak tree. It was one of our favorite hideouts. We would climb up into the tree, and lay down on its large 2 foot wide branches. We would talk away our hot and hazy days of summer in the cool shaded branches. I could still see my 2 by 4’s that I nailed to the tree so that we could get up into it. And they were using my boards to do the same thing, how about that!

The children were between the ages of 10 and 14 years old. As I was watching them, I heard someone say, “Go...Witness...These are My children.” Stunned! I quickly looked back over my left shoulder, but no body was there. Confused; and trying to reason this voice away; I heard Him say again, “Go...Witness...These are my children.” Fear now gripping my heart, I slowly turned around, looking everywhere, for someone; but no body was there. Great fear and panic in my thoughts and in my heart; I took off for home, pedaling as fast as I could go.

It was probably my fastest trip ever down Duffy Road. As I reached home, I keyed myself in the front door, falling face down on the living room floor. I was weeping and crying and saying out loud, “I know it was You Lord! I know it was You!” With the Holy Spirit convicting me, I got myself up and got myself composed. Wiping away the tears, I then made a promise to go back the next day and witness to whom ever was there.

The next day: After working 8 hrs., I came home for supper. That whole day weighed heavy on my mind. It was all I could think of. My thoughts were; “What will I say?” “How will I start this?” I had more questions than answers. Yet, I wanted to keep my promise to God. The first thing I had to do was call my Dad and tell him that I would not be going racing this evening with him and Tim. I had something I had to do. Next; get my bike out and start pedaling. I was praying as I went down the road, nervous as can be, even hoping that nobody would be there.

As I arrived at the entrance of Plan 3, knees knocking and having seconded thoughts. Though fears were doing their best to keep me from going on, I didn't want to fail my Lord again; I did make Him a promise and I was going to keep it. Eventually, the fears subsided and a strange calm came over me, so I pressed onward.

I pedaled up the small grade into Plan 3, and the farther up the hill I went, the more of the Big old oak tree was revealed. As I reached the top of the hill, I looked down at the base of the old oak tree; and my jaw hit the ground. Staring in disbelief; there was enough kids for a backyard party. I counted between 17 and 18 kids, "Wow!" A deep sigh, and here goes nothing. I coasted on down to the old oak tree.

I parked my bike on the street and approached a multitude of unfamiliar faces. Ah! Someone I know. Can you believe that! "Hi J.T.!" He said, "Hi!" Yet he walked on by and went for my bike saying, "Can I take it for a ride? Thanks!" "Ah...Well...O'kay. And off he went, with my only means of escape. "Hmmm..."

I could see that this wasn't going to be easy. Thinking out loud, I said to God, "What do I do? I don't know how to start this?" Just then, Jim a friend of J.T.'s came over and said, "Can I ride your bike next?" "Well...I said, "When J.T. gets back, you may." "By the way, where do you go to church? And so my witnessing debut was under way. The next thing I know, several kids are gathered around me. First 3, then 7, then 13 or more were listening to the gospels message for the first time. I was also sharing about the 'Last Days', things to come, which they were very interested in hearing. They were asking questions and I was doing my level best to answer them. I couldn't believe what I was doing, and I loved it.

We were starting to crowd out into the road and I surely didn't want anyone to get hit, so I suggested that we move over into this neighboring driveway. It was elevated at a slant. I stood up high in the driveway looking down on the children. I continued to witness to them, answering their questions, when I saw my brother Craig go jogging by. He didn't say anything, nor did he stop; But the look in his eyes said, "What..Are..You..Doing?" Later that evening, I cornered him and said, "Why didn't you stop?" He questionedly looked at me and said, "Man,..I could hear someone preaching the gospel loud and clear. I was asking myself, "What fool is..." Then I saw that it was you. I was so embarrassed, I just kept on trucking."

Well after my brother jogged on by, I noticed that J.T. came back with my bike and was standing in the crowd along side his friend Jim. I also noticed that all the kids that were under the old oak tree, were now standing and listening to me, except two. The oldest of the group of kids refused to come over and listen to me. And he was forbidding his girlfriend to come as well. They were sitting on a drainage culvert with his arm around his girl. I watched as the girl peeled off his arm saying, "I want to go over and hear what the man is saying." Now she was standing in the crowd with the other kids, leaving him sitting there by himself.

Well this boy had had just about enough of this street preacher. He went over to his ride(car) and fired that beast up. Cranked on his tunes as loud as the stereo could go. This made it more difficult, but I spoke all the louder. He then, got out of his car and opened all his doors and even the trunk. Now it was nearly impossible to carry on, but I spoke all the louder. This went on for about 5 mins. Finally he said, "I'm leaving! If anyone is going with me, I'm leaving NOW!" He started closing his doors, including his trunk. He jumped into his car and his girlfriend and a few others left with him. I said to

those that remained behind, "It's getting late for me as well and it will be dark soon. And I have to pedal my bike home. Thanks for listening. I'll see ya around." Well my witnessing debut came to an end. I could not believe what I had just done. And what I witnessed what God can do through a willing vessel. He truly is amazing to me.

Closing thoughts:

I really never saw those kids again or what ever became of them, or what was accomplished that day. The big oak tree, died. It was cut down just years later. Plan 3 is still there. And every once in awhile, I deliver mail to that housing Plan. Brings back old memories. Lastly, I do believe I heard from God on that day. An audible voice I know is rare. But I know what I heard.

PS. I thought it unique that God planted this oak tree over a hundred years ago, making a gathering place for children to play under so that He could have me preach the gospel there to them. Amazing!

Just a snippet out of my life; Kevin D. Snyder