

## September Newsletter – Build a Bridge – The Whole Story

After reading the Nicaragua Bridge update in the August newsletter, many may be wondering where I got that story from. Well, what about the Bible story of the Samaritan helping the wounded man lying beside the road, where did that story come from? Let me tell you, each story came from an individual with a servant's heart, someone willing to step out on their faith, putting the needs of others first. The man needing gas for his truck, that's my story; what's YOUR story?

And in case you want to know, yes, I changed some of the details of my story to make it shorter and easier to read for the newsletter. But I now feel led to share the whole story with all of the details. It was the weekend of Cynthia's parent's 50<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary last year, and I was heading back to Blythewood from Lexington early that Sunday morning. As I was about to exit off of I-20 to I-277, I said a very simple prayer, "Lord, please show me someone to help today." As I went around the off-ramp, I looked to my left and saw a man walking with the plastic gas can. He was wearing an old t-shirt and cutoff blue jeans. I stopped, talked with him briefly, and told him to get in. He had walked about two miles from his truck, and was hot and sweaty from the walk. As we rode to the gas station, I asked him if he was a Christian. (Hey, you can talk to someone about anything when he is riding in the backseat of your air conditioned truck and needs gas.) His answer was a shocking one, "I used to be." I immediately asked him what he meant by that statement. He said he was saved once, but all his friends ever told him was since he sinned everyday, he needed to be re-saved everyday, and if he didn't he was not a Christian anymore, and would not go to Heaven if he died at that moment. I then told him if he believed Jesus was the Son of God, died on the cross for his sins, and on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day arose from the dead, and he invited Jesus into his heart, then he was a Christian, and his name was written in the Lambs Book of Life, forever. He looked at me in the mirror and softly said, "No one has ever told me that....I am so glad you stopped to help me." (I could see the tears as they began to stream down his cheeks, right there in the back seat of my truck. I moved the mirror so he couldn't see mine.) I told him we all sin everyday, and need the forgiveness of Jesus everyday, and when we ask for it, he will give it.

Now, what about the \$5? The truth is the man didn't even have a single dollar. In fact he was trying to make it to the blood bank where he was told he could give blood platelets and get \$50, so he could buy the gas for his truck. (He was a land surveyor who had been out of work for almost a year and was desperate for money.) At the gas station, I swiped my credit card and as I began to fill the gas can, he kept saying "That's enough, that's enough!" I told him it would be enough when it was full. Twelve whole dollars worth – I have never missed any of it, nor will I ever.

After taking him back to his truck, and as I went to leave, he wanted my name and address so he could one day repay me. I told him if I gave him that information then he would be worrying about when he would get the money to repay me, and I would be worrying about when he would. Then he thanked me, shook my hand, and, yes, he told me I was an angel. Maybe because it was Sunday morning and nobody else had stopped to help him. But then I reminded myself I was only being obedient to the simple question I had asked earlier, "Lord, please show me someone to help today." I will remember this story for as long as I live, inspiring me to always do more for others than I do for myself.

The story of the Nicaraguan bridge is one we will all remember too. But now the question becomes will you stop and help? Give to the Build a Bridge fund and think about how many people will hear the story and how it came to be, recalling it every time they cross. And remembering a church and a community of Christian believers who love them, who gave generously from their hearts, and who will never miss any of the money given, nor will we ever.