

DR. WILSON'S STORIES OF SOUL-WINNING

by

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CHAPTER THIRTY

THE GROCER LOOKED FOR GHOSTS

The grocery store operated by Mr. Ed H_____ was located one block from the church in which I was holding services. Most of the members of that church lived in the immediate neighborhood and traded with Ed. His store was attractive, well stocked, and the neighbors felt that his prices were right. He did a flourishing business.

One evening the pastor of the church said to me, "Have you noticed this fine grocery store one block down the street?"

"I have noticed it," I said, "but I have never met Mr. Ed who operates it. I would like to meet him. I understand that many of your members trade with him. Is he a Christian, and a member of your church?"

The pastor informed me that Ed was not a member, and neither did he attend the church services. The members frequently invited him, but he always had an excuse. He was short handed in the store and had to spend Sunday cleaning it up, replacing the stock, and getting ready for a big business on Monday. The pastor asked me if I would go and see him, which I promised I would do.

The next day I came to the store and found no one there but Mr. Ed. I introduced myself to him by saying that I was a friend of the pastor of the church up the street a block, and that I had heard good things about his business, the good merchandise he sold, and his gracious way with the customers.

I then said to him, "I understand that you have a number of confessors in this store, and I came in to see them."

Ed seemed to be somewhat disturbed by this remark, and looked quickly around the store, but saw no one else besides myself. He said, "You must be seeing ghosts! I do not see any ghosts, and I see no one else but you in the store with me."

Again I said to him, "I see the confessors very plainly."

And with this statement I again looked around the store in all directions, at the shelves, at the counters, and at the bins. He watched me do it, and again he said, "If there are ghosts in this place, I have never seen them, and I don't see how you can see them. Show me these confessors you are talking about. I would like to see them myself."

I pointed to a shelf full of cans and said, "There are some of these confessors. Some cans are saying, 'I am full of prunes.' Others are saying, 'I am full of beans.' Some of the bottles are saying, 'I am full of ketchup.'" I called Ed's attention to the fact that every can, every bottle, every sack was confessing its contents, each one was full of something.

Turning now to Ed I said, "What are you full of, Ed?"

He answered immediately, "Baseball!"

My reply was, "Is that not the reason why you never talk about the Lord Jesus to anyone? If he were in your heart, if He occupied your mind, you would talk about Him. You would let the people know that you are full of Him."

He hung his head and thought for a while about my statement, and then looking up, said, "You've got something there, preacher. It certainly is true that everything in my store confesses what is in it, and they tell the truth. Nothing in here is misbranded. I will have to think through this business about myself, because I had never thought of it that way. I have tried to be honest with everybody, I live a clean, good life, but evidently that is not enough."

I answered him, "No, it is not enough, for Jesus said, '**He that confesseth me before men, him will I confess before my Father which is in heaven**' (Matthew 10:32)." I also read to him Romans 10:9, "**If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.**"

A customer entered the store just then, and we had to discontinue our conversation. Ed said to me as he turned to wait on the customer, "I will be over tonight to hear you preach."

"I'll look for you tonight, Ed, and will give you a good welcome."

Ed did come that night. He listened closely to the message, and at the close of the meeting was so surrounded with grateful friends expressing their pleasure at his coming that there was no opportunity for me to help him. He did express his own pleasure at being there, and how much he enjoyed the service.

The next day the pastor phoned me that he had just called on Ed in the store to make a purchase, and found him rejoicing in the Lord. He had been saved following the meeting in his own home. He read again the Scriptures I had given him, and saw that he must belong to Christ. He knew that the Saviour had gone to Calvary, but only now did he realize that Christ had really died for him. He accepted the Saviour fully.

Ed became a fine testimony for the Lord in the neighborhood. He joined that church, and became one of the Lord's best "confessors" in that part of the city.

What do you confess in regard to Jesus Christ?

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