

A TEACHER WHO INSPIRES

8/2004 by Mark Beard

Text: 1 Thessalonians 1:2-3

We always thank God for all of you, mentioning you in our prayers. We continually remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Someone once wrote, “Life is a matter of building. Each of us has the opportunity to build something—a secure family, a good reputation, a career, a relationship to God. But some of those things can disappear almost overnight due to financial losses, natural disasters and other unforeseen difficulties.

What are we to do? Daniel Webster offered excellent advice, saying, “If we work on marble it will perish. If we work on brass, time will efface it. If we rear temples, they will crumble to dust. But if we work on men's immortal minds, if we imbue them with high principles, with just fear of God and love of their fellow-men, we engrave on those tablets something which time cannot efface, and which will brighten and brighten to all eternity.” ---*Morning Glory*, July 3, 1993.

It is entirely appropriate that we should take the time to honor our public school teachers who give themselves to the instruction and molding of our children's minds, and in many cases, their character.

Paul gives us the proper perspective on the way we should view good public servants in Romans 13:1-2 when he writes, “Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God.” NIV

He continues in verses 6 and 7, “This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor.” NIV

Writing to the church at Thessalonica, Paul gives us a brief summary of the *characteristics* and the *actions* we can appreciate in all who are faithful servants—whether for Christ or of others.

I. WE CAN APPRECIATE WORK PRODUCED BY FAITH (v.3a).

A. A deeply held conviction that they can make a difference keeps them going.

"If you plan for a year, plant a seed. If for ten years, plant a tree. If for a hundred years, teach the people. When you sow a seed once, you will reap a single harvest. When you teach the people, you will reap a hundred harvests." --*Kuan Chung*

B. A belief in what a child (or others) can be is the heart of every true teacher.

II. WE CAN APPRECIATE LABOR PERFORMED OUT OF LOVE (v.3b).

A. Devotion to a calling springs from a love of the calling.

Dan Rather said, "The dream begins, most of the time, with a teacher who believes in you, who tugs and pushes and leads you on to the next plateau, sometimes poking you with a sharp stick called truth."

B. True loyalty to mission of investing in others can only be prompted by love.

III. WE CAN APPRECIATE FAITHFUL ENDURANCE INSPIRED BY HOPE (v.3c).

A. The hope of what can be ultimately makes the needed patience worthwhile.

B. There are few things as powerful as simply being there when others have forsaken the task.

"Compassionate teachers fill a void left by working parents who aren't able to devote enough attention to their children. Teachers don't just teach; they can be vital personalities who help young people to mature, to understand the world and to understand themselves. A good education consists of much more than useful facts and marketable skills." --*Charles Platt*

Conclusion

The following story from Paul Harvey's "Rest of the story" collection reveals the potential influence and lasting effect that a teacher can have on the lives of her student.

Charlie Ross was the teacher's pet. High school graduating class 1901.

The teacher was Miss Tillie Brown. An English teacher. Young. Attractive.

Everyone knew Charlie was Miss Brown's favorite...and because Miss Brown was such a popular teacher, it placed a lot of pressure on Charlie.

Charlie had to work very hard to defend his title "teacher's pet." He had to read and to study a little bit more than everyone else. Even at that, the other students made jokes behind Charlie's back. Charlie had better amount to something someday, they said, or Miss Brown would never forgive him.

As you have guessed, Charlie did amount to something one day...and perhaps, directly because of what happened during graduation exercises.

Addresses had been made. Diplomas had been handed out. And something else no one had expected.

When Charlie Ross's turn came to receive his diploma, Miss Tillie Brown...the beloved English teacher...rose to congratulate Charlie personally...with a kiss!

That did it!

Charlie may have been class valedictorian; he may have been editor of the student yearbook; he may even have been the teacher's pet. Did that entitle him to such an honor, a kiss from the class's cherished Miss Brown?

After graduation exercises were over, there should have been laughing, shouting, excitement.

Instead, there was quiet disappointment.

Many of the graduates, especially the boys, resented Miss Brown's unabashed display of favoritism. So much so that a handful of them approached Miss Brown, and one of them asked her why others had been so conspicuously neglected.

Miss Brown stood firm. She said Charlie had earned the special recognition. She said when the others had done something worthwhile, they'd get kissed, too. She'd see to it.

If this made the other boys feel a little better, it made Charlie Ross feel worse.

He had been the object of this minor scandal. He had been the cause of all those hurt feelings. In life after high school, Charlie would most certainly have to prove himself worthy of Miss Brown's congratulatory kiss.

And he did.

In the years that followed, Charlie worked very hard. He entered the newspaper business and eventually so distinguished himself that he was handpicked by President Harry Truman to be White House press secretary.

Now, the selection of Charlie Ross for the job was no mere accident. The leader of the boys who approached Miss Brown for the graduating class of 1901, the one who told her that he and the others felt left out, was Harry Truman himself.

And it was to him that she had said, "Do something worthwhile and you'll get your kiss."

Is it any wonder that Charlie Ross's first duty as presidential press secretary, his very first assignment, was to call Miss Tillie Brown in Independence, Missouri?

The message Ross delivered from the President of the United States: "How about that kiss I never got? Have I done something worthwhile enough to rate it now?"

He got his kiss. That is **THE REST OF THE STORY**.

--Paul Harvey, *The Rest of The Story*, Bantam Books, 1977

Reference:

http://www.education-world.com/a_admin/admin162.shtml

