

## Walkin' Sense

### Strangers In A Strange Land

Acts 4: 1-14 NIV

Minister, author, and speaker Ken Gaub wrote about an experience he had back in the 1990s:

"Do you believe that God not only loves you, but knows where you are and what you're doing every minute of the day? I certainly do after an amazing experience I had several years ago.

"At the time I was driving on 1-75 near Dayton, Ohio, with my wife and children. We turned off the highway for a rest and refreshment stop. My wife Barbara and children went into the restaurant. I suddenly felt the need to stretch my legs, so waved them off ahead saying I'd join them later.

"I bought a soft drink, and as I walked toward a Dairy Queen, feelings of self-pity enshrouded my mind. I loved the Lord and my ministry, but I felt drained, burdened. My cup was empty.

"Suddenly the impatient ringing of a telephone nearby jarred me out of my doldrums. It was coming from a phone booth at a service station on the corner. Wasn't anyone going to answer the phone?

"Noise from the traffic flowing through the busy intersection must have drowned out the sound because the service station attendant continued looking after his customers, oblivious to the ringing. 'Why doesn't somebody answer that phone?' I

muttered.

"I began reasoning. It may be important. What if it's an emergency? Curiosity overcame my indifference. I stepped inside the booth and picked up the phone. 'Hello?' I said casually and took a big sip of my drink.

"The operator said: 'Long distance call for Ken Gaub.'

"My eyes widened, and I almost choked on a chunk of ice. Swallowing hard, I said, 'You're crazy!' Then realizing I shouldn't speak to an operator like that, I added, 'This can't be! I was walking down the road, not bothering anyone, and the phone was ringing...'

"'Is Ken Gaub there?' the operator interrupted, 'I have a long distance call for him.'

"It took a moment to gain control of my babbling, but I finally replied, 'Yes, he is here.' Searching for a possible explanation, I wondered if I could possibly be on Candid Camera!

"Still shaken, perplexed, I asked, 'How in the world did you reach me here? I was walking down the road, the pay phone started ringing, and I just answered it on chance. You can't mean me.'

"'Well,' the operator asked, 'Is Mr. Gaub there or isn't he?'

"'Yes, I am Ken Gaub,' I said, finally convinced by the tone of her voice that the call was real.

"Then I heard another voice say, 'Yes, that's him, operator. That's Ken Gaub.'

"I listened dumbfounded to a strange voice identify herself. 'I'm Millie from Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. You don't know me, Mr. Gaub, but I'm desperate. Please help me.'

"'What can I do for you?'

"She began weeping. Finally she regained control and continued. 'I was about to commit suicide and had just finished writing a note, when I began to pray and tell God I really didn't want to do this. Then I suddenly remembered seeing you on television and thought if I could just talk to you, you could help me. I knew that was impossible because I didn't know how to reach you, I didn't know anyone who could help me find you. Then some numbers came to my mind, and I scribbled them down.'

"At this point she began weeping again, and I prayed silently for wisdom to help her. She continued, 'I looked at the numbers and thought, "Wouldn't it be wonderful if I had a miracle from God, and He has given me

Ken's phone number?" I decided to try calling it. I can't believe I'm talking to you. Are you in your office in California?"

"I replied, 'Lady, I don't have an office in California. My office is in Yakima, Washington.'

"A little surprised, she asked, 'Oh really, then where are you?'"

"Don't you know?" I responded. 'You made the call.'

"She explained, 'But I don't even know what area I'm calling. I just dialed the number that I had on this paper.'

"Ma'am, you won't believe this, but I'm in a phone booth in Dayton, Ohio!"

"Really?" she exclaimed. 'Well, what are you doing there?'"

"I kidded her gently, 'Well, I'm answering the phone. It was ringing as I walked by, so I answered it.'

"Knowing this encounter could only have been arranged by God, I began to counsel the woman.

What are the odds of this happening? Sounds unbelievable, doesn't it? Before you 'poo-poo' this away as a story fabricated by a TV preacher-and maybe it is- but is this story any more incredible than this?

"Friend, I don't have any money. But what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk."

The story that the high priest's family is about to hear may have sounded to them as incredible as the phone booth story sounds to us. But, the evidence that Peter and John's story is true happens to be standing right in front of them.

Walkin' Sense: Strangers in a strange land.

Acts, chapter 4:

The priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees came up to Peter and John while they were speaking to the people. <sup>2</sup> They were greatly disturbed because the apostles were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead. <sup>3</sup> They seized Peter and John, and because it was evening, they put them in jail until the next day. <sup>4</sup> But many who heard the message believed, and the number of men grew to about five thousand.

<sup>5</sup> The next day the rulers, elders and teachers of the law met in Jerusalem. <sup>6</sup> Annas the high priest was there, and so were Caiaphas, John, Alexander and the other men of the high priest's family. <sup>7</sup> They had Peter and John brought before them and began to question them: "By what power or what name did you do this?"

<sup>8</sup> Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: "Rulers and elders of the people! <sup>9</sup> If we are being called to account

today for an act of kindness shown to a cripple and are asked how he was healed, <sup>10</sup> then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed. <sup>11</sup> He is

“the stone you builders rejected, which has become the capstone.”<sup>[a]·[b]</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”

<sup>13</sup> When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus. <sup>14</sup> But since they could see the man who had been healed standing there with them, there was nothing they could say. (Acts 4:1-14)

Back on those long summer days when I headed for the kitchen door that led to a breezeway and garage where my bicycle and a black and white border collie waited, mom would usually ask me two questions; where you going and who you going with?

It might be to the Gilliland's back yard for a football game. Or to Keith Edwards to hunt arrowheads; Or Gib Carver's or Clyde Evan's.

Where you going and who with...

Peter came home one day, gathered a few personal items and headed back out the door. Someone may have asked him the

same two questions; maybe his wife or mother-in-law...where you going and who you going with?

He may have answered something like this: 'I'm meeting John. I'm not sure where we are going, but we are going with Jesus.'

On one of his trips, he came home with a pretty incredible tale, much like our opening story. 'Hunny, would you believe that Jesus gave me power over demons and disease and I cast demons out of people and healed some?'

This is the same Peter who had a very dark time during Jesus arrest and trial. Now, along with John and a healed cripple, he stands in front of one of the most powerful gatherings of men in his day and is asked, "By what power or what name did you do this?"

May I loosely interpret this as, 'Where and with whom have you been?'

Peter and John's lives had been changed. They had been with Jesus. These untrained and uneducated fishermen spoke with boldness. They had witnessed and experienced some incredible events. And when they spoke they were sure of what they were speaking about.

They knew that God's Word was true and unchangeable. When they spoke in the power of the Holy Spirit, they knew that they were speaking with the authority of God. Jesus had taught them walkin' sense. Now they were strangers in a strange land.

They had been promised His presence in situations like this. Peter and John knew with confidence that God's love, plan and will was with them.

These men who were examining Peter and John should have known without asking where this supernatural power came from. These men were supposed to be the spiritual leaders of God's people.

There was a third person standing with Peter and John. The man who was healed; the man who sat day after day, week after week, for years, begging from those who entered the temple was standing with Peter and John.

As powerful and authoritative as the examiners were, these religious leaders could do nothing for the cripple man when he sat begging at that gate. Why?

The answer to that question is revealed in the examiners question to Peter and John. "By what power or what name did you do this?"

I wonder if the healed cripple was surprised by this question? Did his eyes widen and his chin drop as he thought, 'You guys are my spiritual leaders and you ask a question like this? You have to ask how this happened and who did it? Where have *you* been, and who have *you* been with?'

The stone the builders rejected had become the cornerstone. Salvation is found in none other...but Israel's supposed spiritual leaders rejected this truth.

There is a lot of noise in the media today calling people in all sorts of directions. Everything from the military luring incentive posters and slogans like, "Sign up today and receive \$50,000 for college!" "Get a \$20,000 signing bonus!" "Join the Navy and see the world!" "You can Fly High in the US Air Force!" "We are looking for a few good men... can you be one of us?" to retirement centers promising seniors the good life. These advertisements rarely reveal the costs.

As we get older and hopefully wiser, we understand bling and shiney things always have an underling cost; there are very few free rides.

The powers of darkness want you to focus on the bells and whistles, the blingy shinny things...not the cost; not the sacrifice.

I'm going to go out on a limb here and make a guess. I'm going to guess that the healed beggar standing with Peter and John wasn't dressed to well. But, I'll bet that the examiners, the high priest and his family had on the bling of the day.

I wonder if this beggar realized that he was richer in every way than all his examiners combined? Why?

He was with Peter and John, who had been with Jesus. He heard them speak with confidence and authority in the power of the Holy Spirit.

He was right there when they faced the Sanhedrin, and they didn't buckle or

knuckle under to the pressure. Their confidence in Jesus, passed on to this healed man, one can only wonder how many lives he would touch with his story.

Where and with whom are you going? Do you have walkin' sense? Do you understand that once you have been with Jesus, you are now a stranger in a strange land? This world is not your home. Your perspective has changed. You are a spiritual being having a human experience. Don't expect your life to be the same as it was before. You are now able to see life from God's point of view.

Bazaar and incredible events like a cripple being healed or strange phone calls should not surprise you.

If you go with Jesus, wherever you go, you will be a stranger in a strange land. But know with confidence that God's Word is true and unchangeable. He will be with you, and you will have walkin' sense.