



THE STORY OF DENNIS

Dennis was a young man in his thirties. I had become acquainted with him through his frequent stays at the Hardin County Jail, and many other brushes with Law Enforcement. Dennis was physically handicapped, but he never let his handicap slow him down from drinking alcohol. Along with his alcoholic binges, Dennis would waste what little money he had left at the backroom gambling houses on Glendale Hill. This all took place in the early to late seventies in Hardin County. With all his faults, Dennis had the type of personality that you just had to like. I had a compassionate heart for him. I would look at him and think, but for the Grace of God - There go I.

One evening Dennis showed up at the door of the jail and asked to see me. The officer paged and I went to the door to see my frequent visitor. There he was - Wet - Smelly - Dirty and Hungry. "Chaplain Vance", he said, "can you give me some dry clothes and something to eat?" Then with a smile and hesitation in his voice, he added - "and please don't preach to me." At once I knew what he meant. Larry help me - and Please Preach to me - and as always - I did. After I filled his stomach with some good jail food. I insisted that he take a shower and gave him clean dry clothes. Dennis was ready to leave. As I walked him to the door with my hand on his shoulder, I said, "Listen Dennis if you don't stop this lifestyle, you're going to end up dead." I knew he was going to agree with me. He always did. And he always went back to the same routine. I would always expect to see him again within a couple of months. But, just long enough to get Warm - Fed - Clean and Preached to. But, it was not to be. Within two weeks Dennis was found in a ditch along 31W in Radcliff. He had been stabbed to death. I don't know if Dennis ever gave his heart to Christ. I can only hope. But I do know this. There are multitudes out there just like Dennis, crying out the only way they know how. It's our Christian responsibility to express God's Love to them through the gifts and abilities our Lord has blessed us with. Be compassionate - not judgmental and remember - ***"But For The Grace Of God"***.

THOUGHT THIS MAY FIT THE STORY OF DENNIS

When some fellow yields to temptation and breaks a conventional law,
We look for no good in his makeup, ***But Lord how we look for the flaw;***

No one asks, "who did the tempting"? Nor allows for the battles he fought;
His name becomes food for the jackals, ***the Saints who have never been caught;***

I'm a sinner, O Lord, and I know it. I am weak, and I blunder and fail.
I am tossed on life's stormy ocean, like a ship that is caught in a gale;

I am willing to trust in Thy Mercy, to keep the commandments Thou hast Taught.
But deliver me Lord from the judgment, ***of the Saints who have never been caught.***

Your Pastor Loves You