

I SEE YOU IN I.C.U.

Pastor Jim Bornzin September 2010 Luke 16:19-31

I didn't see you.
I didn't really see you.
All I remember was a bum
Lying near the door
Of the office building where I worked.
I remember the black trench coat,
Faded gray, dirty, torn and ragged,
Like your hair, black, or was it gray?
Greasy, long, and matted
You never got in my way.
You had a scruffy dog
That licked your sores.
I imagine you ate from the dumpster.
You couldn't afford the stores.
I was hardly aware you existed
Yet I knew you were there.
You made me uncomfortable
So I looked the other way
I didn't see your sores
I didn't see your pain
I didn't see you.
At least not then.

I was too busy
On my way to the top
Of the building, where my company
Was rising, not-stop
Because of my invention
So slick and so fast, soon
All of our competition was passed.
My design, I am proud to say,
Let me stand out in a crowd, any day.
We started small, but then
Our market share kept growing
Our stock just kept climbing
My success never slowing
People said I was rich, admired by all
In the business world I stood, seven feet
tall.

I was married for a while
To a quite attractive wife
But eventually she became
A drag upon my life
Though I gave her everything
She became a spoiled witch
The divorce for me was painless
And I left her fairly rich
Free at last to pursue my dream
Of climbing to the top
Success seemed so rewarding
I knew I couldn't stop.

You were there when things started
changing
I remember quite well
The day God started rearranging
And my life began to look like hell.
A stockholders' meeting was scheduled
For two that afternoon
I came back from lunch in denial
Yet had a sense of impending doom.
I remember my lunch didn't set well
That my stomach felt rather queasy,
I remember your presence there at my door
You made me feel uneasy.
The stockholders were angry
The Board of Directors in a rage
The value of our stock was falling
I tried to act the sage.
I said, "It's only short term
We'll recover from the loss
Our development team can handle it
We'll show 'em who is boss!"
You see, the competition
Had announced the other day
They would make the product cheaper
But better in every way.
They went ahead and did it
Their market share increased
While our share and stock went tumbling
It fell without surcease.

I used to drink to celebrate
The victories I'd won
I'd raise my glass, encouraging
My guests to have some fun.
But I began to drink alone
And fearful I became
It seemed I could no longer win
The competition game.

At work I grew resentful
Irritable and rude
I yelled at staff and workers
I was not understood.
The company was slipping
Needed someone big to blame
And soon the Board of Directors
Had settled on my name.
My job was lost, my fortune gone
My lifelong dream a bust
With nothing left, I sold my home
My life had turned to dust.

continued

It's amazing how fast it happens
 How quickly things turn sour
 For several months I struggled on
 Now, seems like just an hour.
 Once again, I turned to drink
 This time to ease the pain
 I found myself outside a bar
 At midnight in the rain.
 My trenchcoat soaking wet
 And pants with mud were spattered
 I crossed the street to my hotel
 Somehow, nothing mattered.
 I saw bright lights come at me
 I heard the tires squeal
 Then silence, darkness, a distant siren
 Nothing could I feel.

They told me I was in the E.R.
 I came to for just a while
 I remember nothing else that night
 Except... a nurse's smile.
 In and out of a coma
 For a month, or was it two?
 Lines and tubes and pumps and drains
 I lay in I.C.U.

It was there I had a vision
 So real and so clear
 I saw you lying near the street
 I saw you shed a tear.
 For me you cried, you thought I'd died
 You saw me hit that night
 You watched the ambulance depart
 Your heart was filled with fright.
 Suddenly, the vision changed
 I saw you once again
 This time you were in heaven
 Surrounded there by friends.
 The palm trees swayed, children played
 On a beach of snow-white sand
 I heard guitars and saw the stars
 And lovers hand in hand.
 I knew your name was Lazarus
 This time I saw your face
 I called to you and tried to tell
 The torment of this place.
 In and out of consciousness
 I fought with stress and strain
 Day and night and week by week
 I tossed and turned in pain.

Then, one day, I wakened
 In a new and different bed
 I was aware of sunlight
 And the pillow 'neath my head.
 Out of I.C.U. at last
 Awake and eating food
 No more trache and no more tubes
 Could life really be this good?
 I bought a morning paper
 From a lady dressed in pink
 I skimmed the front page headlines
 And just began to think
 Of how much time had passed
 Of how the world had changed
 And how my own life had been spared
 Everything rearranged!

I laughed at all the comic strips
 And before I called it quits
 I turned the page and there I found
 The space for the "obits."
 I saw the picture of a man
 Somehow I thought I knew
 His name was Charles Lazarus
 Could that, my friend, be you?
 I read the short description
 Of your life so brief and sad
 Veteran of a forgotten war
 A husband and a dad.
 I couldn't shake the image
 Of the bum, still in my head
 I knew that I had seen you
 Knew now, that you were dead.

In I.C.U. I saw you
 It was there I surely knew
 That you had gone to heaven
 And the meaning of I.C.U.
 Intensive Care they gave me
 To make my body well
 Intensive Care God gave me
 To save my soul from hell.
 Jesus is the sign of God's
 Intensive Care for me
 And now, intensely caring
 I open my eyes and see.

Continued

No ambulance came for Lazarus
Who died outside my door
No ambulance came for Jesus
Whose love for me was more
Than I could ever hope for
More than I deserve
And yet He died to save me
That I might see and serve.

I'm working again at a full-time job
And volunteer down at the Mission
I see the men and women there
I talk of Christ's commission
To go and make disciples
To baptize and to teach
I realize that there are some
Whom I will never reach.
But now at last... I see them
As the friends that they can be
I'm willing now to look at them
For God ...at last... reached me.
I don't understand the whole good book
But this much I know is true
Jesus is God's way of saying,
"I.C.U."