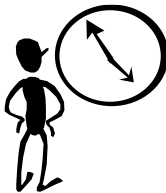


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Time of Assembly

Sunday:

Bible Study 4:00 p.m.

Worship 5:00 p.m.

Wednesday:

Bible Study 7:00 p. m.

Love Finally Broke Through

By Jefferson David Tant

Spencer Tracy is acclaimed by many to have been the greatest of all American actors. While much is known concerning his public life, little is known about his private life. A story from his private life is both touching and edifying at once, and I would like to share it with you.

When Tracy was in his 20s, he married, and a son was born to the young couple. The son, John, was born with a severe handicap—total deafness. As the result of his inability to hear a sound, he was also unable to speak. Otherwise, the child was a normal, intelligent, loving baby.

One evening, Tracy came in from his performance at a theater, tired and weary after a hard day's work. Utterly exhausted, he went right to bed. Around 3 a.m., Tracy was awakened by some strange sense. He did not know what had disturbed his sleep, but in the dimness of the room he looked over to the little toddler's crib, and there stood Johnny, waving at his daddy. Immediately Tracy leaped out of the bed to embrace and kiss his dear son. He realized that in his haste for bed, he had forgotten to tell his little son goodnight. A normal child would have cried out for attention, but little Johnny was powerless to do that. So he stood, patiently waving to his daddy, until his love finally penetrated and conquered even the deep sleep of his father.

Love does that, you know. When all else fails, God's Word declares: "Love never fails" (**1 Cor. 13:8**). Love is so powerful, it is greater even than faith and hope (**v. 13**). The reason for this is found in the character of love. "Love is very patient and kind, never jealous or envious,... boastful or proud,... haughty or selfish or rude. Love does not demand its own way...is not irritable or touchy...does not hold grudges and will hardly even notice when others do it wrong ...is nev-

er glad about injustice, but rejoices whenever truth wins out. If you love someone you will be loyal to him no matter what the cost...always believe in him,...expect the best of him, and...stand your ground in defending him” (1 Cor. 13:4-7, LB).

When you’ve tried everything imaginable to “get through” to another, when you have exhausted every means to disarm your enemy, why not try love? Instead of trying to “get even” to pay back all the misdeeds of your enemy, why not give serious thought to the suggestions of Paul? “Let love be without hypocrisy...Render to no man evil for evil...be at peace with all men...If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him to drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good” (Rom. 12:9-21).

Love is the golden key that unlocks the deepest recesses of the heart and soul. No man or woman exists whose heart cannot be moved in some way, touched to some extent with love. After all, love is the badge of our discipleship. The Lord himself declared: “A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:34-35)

We will never know what it is to serve God, nor will we ever be blessed to see that eternal city, until we learn the meaning of love (1 John 1; 4:19).

NOW READ THE REST OF THE STORY

John was born with what is known as Usher Syndrome, which also causes gradual blindness due to Retinitis Pigmentosa—starting at birth. The doctors advised the Tracys to place John in an institution for retarded children, but the Tracys would have none of it. They promptly went to work—talking to him, reading him nursery rhymes, playing games with him... loving him.

His mother Louise early on “kept repeating the word ‘talk’... a hundred... sometimes three hundred times” in twice or thrice daily “exercises.” One day, John, then 3 or 4, leaned his head close to hers and said, “talk”—his very first word. John learned how to lip-read and to speak, read and write and was fully functioning by age 11. Tragedy again visited when John contracted polio at age six, leaving him with a withered right leg. In time, the Tracys founded the John Tracy Clinic. It became the only such entity worldwide to provide service, free of charge, to parents of infants and preschool children born with hearing losses.

In time John married and fathered a son. John was always intent, as his son and fellow artist, Joseph Spencer Tracy, characterized it, on living “each day to the fullest, regardless” of his daily challenges.

“I’m an artist, writer, photographer; I played polo, tennis; swim, water-ski, dance,” he wrote in his journal in 1975.” I got married, had a family. I’m also profoundly deaf, going blind, had polio. What can you do?” *Well, apparently everything!* He

was declared legally blind in the early eighties and, by 1994, was totally blind.

“He was strong until the end,” said his son Joe, and “always prayed for other people, didn’t pray for himself”—a lesson in selflessness he communicated to his three grandchildren.

As for actually communicating with words, John could talk, but his deafness combined with his blindness required some special techniques for his family to reply back.

His wife Cyndi described how he loved to converse and remembered with particular warmth those special times, often at the end of a long day, that she would be perched next to him as he would regale her with fascinating stories. She would reply by spelling words on his back. Or, for shorter responses, she would spell words on his hand—a hand that so often held her hand, while tapping her other hand, as he said, “God bless you, Cyndi. Thank you.”

For, whatever else he was, John Tracy was always profoundly grateful for all life’s blessings. John died June 15, 2007, five days after the 40th anniversary of his father’s death.

The moral to the story? **You can overcome.** There was a man many years ago who faced many difficulties in life. His name was Paul, and he wrote some poignant words: “I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.” (**Philippians 4:13**) The moral to the story? **Never, never, never give up!**

Examining “Human Rights”

By Jefferson David Tant

A familiar phrase to Americans is found in our Declaration of Independence, which says, “*We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator, with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.*”

You will notice that credit for these truths is given to God, our Creator. We are thankful today for the foresight of our founding fathers, and their acknowledgement of the existence of God and the blessings He has bestowed on His creation.

Now consider a world where there is no God. What “unalienable rights” would men have? There would be none except the instinct of self-preservation. What rights did humans have in the slaughter of millions under the rule of atheist Marxists in Russian, or the ethnic cleansing of millions of Jews under the atheist German Hitler, or the present slaughter of millions of Uighurs under China’s atheistic Communist government? And we could go on and on with similar stories. We must consider that this is one of the ultimate conclusions of atheism.

Sadly, it is evident today that there are forces within our nation that are doing their best to erase any mention of God or any religious influence in our nation. Military chaplains have had severe restrictions placed upon them. Prayer and Bibles have been kicked out of our public schools. Can you fathom a 5-year-old kindergartener being rebuked for bowing her head to give thanks for her food in the school cafeteria? Or a young boy forbidden to bring his Bible to read during a class period devoted to bringing a favorite book to read? Then there was the case of a girl who was to deliver the valedictorian speech at graduation. She was instructed that she could not mention God in her speech. This young woman formulated a plan with her fellow students. At one point in her speech, she sneezed. The class in unison said “God bless you.” Good for them.

A State Department report points out that “more than half the world’s population suffers under regimes where the most basic freedoms are systematically denied, or under regimes too weak or unwilling to protect individual rights, especially in the context of ethnic conflict.”

Without God, what “rights” are humans born with? It is interesting that there are atheists who give credit to the “idea” of God and its benefits while denying that God exists. Friederich Nietzsche, who claimed that “God is dead,” said universal human rights came from a Christian view of the world. Tom Holland, the author of *Dominion*, has recognized that our ideas about freedom and the dignity of humans is the product of Christianity. The atheist philosopher Luc Ferry, wrote a book titled *A Brief History of Thought*, and observed that the idea of the existence of a God is why the “west owes its entire democratic inheritance.”

Yet increasingly, we see believers in God paying the price for their faith. A New Jersey teacher suspended for giving a student a Bible; the Washington football coach placed on leave for saying a prayer on the field at a game’s end; the Atlanta fire chief fired for publishing a book defending Christian moral teaching; the Marine court-martialed for posting a Bible verse above her desk; and other examples of the new intolerance. Anti-Christian activists hurl smears like “bigot” and “hater” at Americans who hold traditional beliefs about marriage and accuse anti-abortion Christians of waging a supposed “war on women.”

Various conservative institutions face pressure to conform to secularist ideology—or else. Evangelical schools like Gordon College in Massachusetts and Kings College in New York have had their accreditation questioned. It is argued that such schools don’t deserve accreditation, period. Activists are targeting home-schooling for being a Christian thing; atheist Richard Dawkins and others even compare it to child abuse. Student groups like InterVarsity have been kicked off campuses.

American Atheists Association, Black Lives Matter, Military Religious Freedom Foundation... Well, there is not enough room to list them all. According

to an article in the Washington Times, February 24, 2015, here is what we face: “More than 200 groups and organizations that ‘openly display bigotry’ toward the Christian faith have been identified on an interactive map, a traditional values group said Tuesday. These atheist, humanist, gay rights or anti-Christian groups have made the list because they have tried to silence Christians or remove all public displays of Christian heritage and faith in America, said the American Family Association (AFA) in Tupelo, MS.” (Cheryl Wetzstein)

So, in the face of increasing attacks on Christians, what are we to do? Here are some suggestions.

(1) Pray for strength. “The LORD is far from the wicked, But He hears the prayer of the righteous.” (Prov. 15:29) “My soul weeps because of grief; Strengthen me according to Your word.” (Psalm 119:28)

(2) Pray for our leaders. “First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior.” (I Tim. 2:1-3)

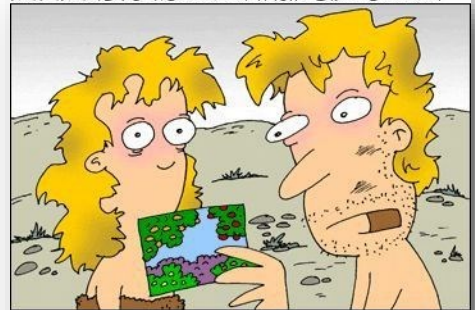
(3) Strengthen our faith. In a conversation Christ was having with his disciples, “The apostles said to the Lord, “Increase our faith!” (Luke 17:5) And how do we increase our faith? “Be diligent (“Study” KJV) to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.” (II Tim. 2:15)

(4) Resolve to stand strong, as did Job. “Though He slay me, I will hope in Him.” (Job 13:15) Which of us has endured one-tenth of the trials that Job suffered?

(5) Accept persecution when it comes. “Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.” (Matt. 5:10-12)

As our nation faces trying times, let us pray for a restoration of the principles that guided our forefathers which are enshrined in our “Pledge of Allegiance:” *“I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.”* And yes, some are now clamoring for the removal of “under God.” I still like the song “God Bless America!”

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Thanks to Mikel Rice (See Genesis 3) 10-03-2003
"THE GARDEN IS STILL AWESOME, WISH YOU WERE HERE ... LOVE GOD"