

The sun faded behind the distant clouds in the west as Lee reached forward and pulled on the lights of his 1983 Ford Escort. The drive from the city to his small community gave him ample time to reflect upon the day's highlights. He marveled that his God would position people in a place and time in history in order to bring Him glory. Just the one vote of Senator Winiger was all it took to give Judge Jones a favorable recommendation to the entire Senate. *Surely you are a just God who would allow an honorable man victory in the midst of political deceit and treachery.*

He thought of how he would explain his good fortune to Pastor Hancock of being asked to accompany the Jones' family and a few intimate friends to dinner in a private dining room at the Embassy Suites motel. After all, the judge insisted he come as a friend of Laura's.

He smiled at himself as he remembered being seated next to her at the row of tables and speaking with such celebrities as Senators Vorbach and Garr. Vorbach had done most of the talking, relating to everyone the strange actions of Senators Parrish and Milton, and the final intolerance of Winiger to Allen.

He thought back on the conversation with Bradley Jones after Laura introduced them during the meal. Having read the newspaper articles about this young high school quarterback with the potential to make it big in the college game had given Lee plenty of dialog with Brad. An even better rapport was built when Brad found out that this was the same Lee Jackson who held the state high school record for receptions as a wide receiver for a very good Bloomington South football team in the middle 1980's. He chuckled out loud in his car as he remembered Laura's shocked look as if she were surprised that Lee was an athlete. Brad had answered her puzzled look – "He's the perfect receiver, Laura: tall, lanky, big hands, and if I remember correctly, the gentlest hands a pass ever floated into." Brad's look turned puzzled as Lee told him that he passed up a football scholarship to the University of Illinois in order to attend a Bible college and study for the ministry.

Still in all, the freshest thoughts on him mind was when he had taken Laura back to her car at the law library where she had left it early that morning. He reflected on their hour-long conversation in the law school parking lot before they said good night to each other. They had shared their salvation experiences and growth in the Lord. She had spoken of her mother, her father's death, her church, and her schooling. She had asked him to call her when he got home in order to plan a time to meet at the library in the morning.

He looked over to the passenger seat in his car and imagined her sitting there just as she had been forty-five minutes earlier. He conjured up the details of their good-bye – the awkward handshake, watching her get out of his car and into hers, and the wave and smile as she pulled the car out of its place and passed his.

What made him drive by the church instead of going straight to his apartment was partially habit helped along by his deep thoughts. He usually drove the few blocks out of his way to insure that everything was fine at the church. He expected to see the normal dark buildings. Instead he saw a parking lot full of cars. Lee's initial panic was that he had not remembered a special service in the light of his busy day. Then he thought as he parked his car that he was sure – ninety percent sure – that there was no service planned

for Thursday night. He checked his watch. *Even if there was, it still wouldn't be going on this late.* As he was getting out of his car, he saw Daryl Snyder walking briskly up to his car.

"Lee, where have you been?" A very concerned tone came from the man.

"What's wrong Daryl?" Lee looked at a very distraught deacon.

"They've arrested Pastor, Lee. They took all the church and school records. Pastor's in jail."

"Calm down, Daryl. Who did?"

"The Sheriff's men, State Police and Welfare people.... You're needed inside, Lee. Dr. Ryker is speaking to the people. He told me to keep watch for you our here."

The two men entered the outside doors leading to the foyer, and then through the swinging doors of the auditorium. Eyes followed the men as they made their way down the left side of the room to an empty place on the front pew.

Lee noticed that as far as he could tell, then entire church was present at this meeting. The deacons were already seated on the front row except for Daryl. He looked up at Dr. Ryker, who acknowledged him with a nod of his head as he continued speaking to the people.

"The main thing to remember is to not panic," stated the older pastor.

Lee remembered the first time he had seen and heard Dr. David Ryker; three years earlier at a chapel service at the Bible College Lee attended. Then, as now, Ryker commanded respect as he spoke. There was something about this older man of God which people wanted to follow. It certainly was not his stature, for he stood a mere five-ten, although he seemed much taller when standing in the pulpit. It was not his handsome face, for the receding hairline made for a high forehead. His voice was not the voice of an orator, although the listeners could tell he was quite intelligent and articulate. Lee had decided that the difference which made Ryker a rare man of God was his ability to dissect the Word of God, leaving his listeners in awe of the truths in the Scriptures. Also, Ryker had the unique ability to apply the Bible to today's world, demand obedience to the Book, and convince those who did not obey that they were in the wrong.

"We have a longer road to travel in this situation than most of you can imagine. Most of you seated here tonight believe that al this is some big misunderstanding on someone's part downtown, and will be rectified by sitting down and talking with the authorities. I hope you are correct, and we plan to do just that. But do not place your trust in that scenario. Too much is at stake here for anyone o admit fault. Remember, jailing a pastor is a huge risk for the officials involved. This would only have been done if the stakes were high enough for them to risk the public outcry.

"I know what some of you are thinking. You are thinking that Pastor Hancock must have done something wrong or he wouldn't have been arrested. I can assure you that he did nothing wrong or illegal. He and I have spent much time deliberating these kinds of situations in the past. We know that someone is doing this for political interests. Before this is all over, we will find out what those interests are.

"The first thing I will do is to call as many pastors to come here as I know will come. Second, we will endeavor to find out the cause as to why the civil authorities are attempting this injustice. Third, we will situate, ourselves to counter bad or malicious press. Fourth, phone banks will be set up to contact other pastors and Christian leaders, state officials, and media contacts.

“I’ll take any questions you have at this time, but first let me read to you the most important Scripture for this church at this time. *For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers...*”

---

The stillness of the barracks was only broken now and then by someone snoring at the other end of the room from where Don and Eddie lay on their bunks. Having just run another five miles was enough to cause their bodies to want to remain motionless, even though their minds were still sharp and alert. They heard a low moan come from the darkness on their right as one of their companions turned over on his bunk.

“Eddie,” Don whispered. “You awake?”

“Huh?”

“Are you still awake?”

“Yeah, barely.... Whacha need?”

“Have you wondered if all this is right?”

“Don, we’ve been through this before.”

“I know.” Don paused. “I just can’t help seeing the end result of all this being major bloodshed in the streets. You know, innocent bystanders being killed – even children. You know, like it is in Lebanon.”

“There’s not much chance of that. Our only purpose is to pose a threat to the authorities in order to keep them honest.”

“It’s just hard to believe we have come to the last resort – armed resistance.”

“Look buddy, we’ve tried all the other ways. We put our trust in our elected officials, and even the ones we supported turned on us and passed laws against freedom. Then we went to the courts and found dishonest judges who ruled for public policy and against individual liberty. These judges rule in behalf of a state’s compelling interest and against our religious freedom. Remember what Adam’s said at the first meeting back home?”

“Yeah, I remember.”

“You try the ballot box first, and if the ballot box doesn’t work, you try the jury box next, and if the jury box doesn’t work, you have to try the cartridge box.”

“It all sounds cute, Eddie, but it seems as though we’re leaving something out. I mean, where does God fit in?”

“Hey, we’ve been told a hundred times that this is for God’s Cause.”

“Eddie, I know these guys talk about God, but it would really be stretching it to say that they were born again Christians.”

“I know they have some really strange beliefs about the Bible. But Don, the evangelical churches aren’t doing anything to preserve our Christian freedoms that built this country.”

“I know, I know. But if a person isn’t saved, how can God be glorified?”

“I don’t have all the answers either, Don. If you find anything better, let me know. Until then, this is the best I can come up with. Besides, there’s nothing wrong with a man learning how to protect himself and his family better, is there?”

“I guess not.”

“Go to sleep. We have early morning target practice and then have to leave for Indiana. We need the rest.”

There was a long pause as Don thought about the past few days and the training they were receiving.

“Eddie, could you take a person’s life?”

There was no answer.

“Good night, Ed.”

---

Judge Jones and his wife had retired to their bedroom after the most intense day of their lives. Nancy’s excuse was to get away from the excitement of the children. The judge’s reason was to be alone with his wife for a while so the two of them could talk.

“Nancy, can I share something with you?”

“What is it, dear?” She continued changing into her nightgown.

“Something of great significance took place today that I want to tell you about.”

“What could be more significant than you being a step away from Indiana Supreme Court Justice?”

“Well, I told you that Bernard Sallenger came to see me today, but I only told you most of what he said to me.”

Nancy had just finished placing her clothes in the hamper and sat on her side of the bed.

“What else did he say?”

“Well, first, what do you think of Laura?”

“I think she’s a lovely young woman, and I think you are changing the subject often enough to keep me puzzled.” She smiled.

“Do you remember me telling you about Paul Stiley, my roommate in law school?”

“You did it again, dear. Now, make your point.”

“Paul was Laura’s father and my best friend in law school for the three years we were together. During that time I knew that Paul was a very religious person. Well, religious isn’t really the word that described him. Paul was genuine. He not only said he was a Christian; he lived it more than any other person I have ever known. Many times he shared with me his faith in Jesus Christ. A couple of times I even went to church with him. At the time, I felt that religion and my goals in life just did not mix. I was convinced that if I lived right and was moral, that I would be respected, and a good man.”

“I’ve always respected your values, dear.”

“Well, when I received Laura’s resume from Tom Gladden, I started thinking about all Paul had said to me back then. Even the few times we met over the years for lunch, each time he would tell me that I still needed a Savior to believe in. Then he died about ten years ago. The last time we met. Paul had pleaded with me to become a Christian. I told him that I didn’t need Jesus Christ. I had my own belief in God, and if I lived a good life, I would be all right. Now, every time I look at Laura, I see his face filled with tears of love for me, begging me to accept Jesus Christ. Then entered a man named Bernie....”

“Is Justice Sallenger a Christian, Randy?”

“Exactly like Paul was. Bernie took me through the same Bible verses that Paul had shown me. I thought to myself, ‘Here is one of the best judges in the state, and he leads a godly life.’ As the verses soaked into my heart, I knew that I needed to accept Him as my personal Savior. In spite of what the hearing held, my most important decision came before the hearing even started.”

Nancy placed her hand on his shoulder and looked into his gray eyes. She had never seen her husband so seriously open with her before. She had always been the emotional one of this marriage. He had been the strong one who stabilized their family.

“Darling, what did you do?”

“Bernie led in prayer, and then I prayed for God to save me, forgive me of my sins, and be my Lord and Savior.”

Her words were tender. “I knew something had happened. You were different. I could tell some kind of change came over you, but I just thought it was the pressure of the hearing.”

“I wanted you to know the decision I made today.”

“I’m glad you did. What do I need to do?”

“What do you mean?”

“If you are a Christian, then I should be one, too, shouldn’t I?”

“I suppose.”

“So, what do I do?”

“Do we have a Bible around here? I think I could show you.”

“The family Bible is in the living room on one of the bookshelves.”

“Wait, I have a thought.” He reached for his address book on his night stand and grabbed the phone, placing it between them on the bed.

“*Hello?*”

“May I speak to Laura Stiley, please?”

“*Speaking...*”

“Laura, this is Judge Jones. Sorry to bother you at home, but do you have a Bible?”

“*Certainly, hold please.*”

“Here, Nancy, I’ve got you your very own personal expert. Just ask her any questions about it you want.”

He handed the receiver to his wife.