

## Sidewalk Lessons

I walk. God told me to through the doctor some time ago, and I'm glad he did. Early in the morning I walk through South Boston, for spiritual and physical exercise, some forty miles each month. Long before most have arisen, I have walked by your house, prayed for you, and walked on.

It is interesting that there are miles of sidewalks here, and many places within the town that there are none. On those occasions I transition to the street, or turn to walk in a place where sidewalks have been placed.

One interesting note from this morning. The ancient iron covers for the water meters come from two places. One is Goldsboro, N.C, a company founded in 1885, Dewey Brothers, which also cast parts for locomotives in their iron foundry.

The other is from Wabash, Indiana, post office box OO, it says. I suppose that is a really old cover, since there are a lot of post office boxes issued in the years since box OO was given out. It appears that Edwin Ford founded a company in 1898 in Wabash which eventually began to make the boxes and covers, making sure in the design that it would withstand freezing temperatures.

But back to the sidewalks and roads. Oh the places God takes us, and the ways we can impact the world as we travel them!

Jesus told the story of the Good Samaritan, who was traveling the road from Jerusalem, and stopped to help a wounded man on the "sidewalk" to remind us of how we can make a difference. Whatever road we travel, let us be alert to the good we can do.

We travel sidewalks and main walks every day. We have many opportunities to help others, some in the way described above, but mostly in smaller ways which can make life better.

Betty White gives her insight on this. "If you're walking with your lady on the sidewalk, I still like to see a man walking street-side, to protect the lady from traffic. I grew up with that, and I hate to see something like that get lost. I still like

to see that a man opens the door. I like those touches of chivalry that are fast disappearing.”

In the old days, before the streets were paved, gentlemen threw down their cloaks for the women to cross on when rainy days came, or carried them over to the other side. Opening the car door, showing respect, protecting those who are in need, these are things that I think Jesus would smile on. Consideration for others has long disappeared for many in this world, but it can return, as we begin again think of others before ourselves.

Sidewalks, or the spaces and questions in between, prompt us to think deeper, and ask questions. They can prompt us to think when they were made, who made them, and even to consider both the history and future of the part we walk on.

“I am interested in the gaps between one piece of sidewalk and the next. I am interested in the things for which we don't always have a name, and the things that are not easy to articulate - the difference between what we think and how we feel.”~ Amy Bloom

It could be a sidewalk where you come to faith. Be alert to God, and welcome him when he speaks. “I don't know what in the world happened. I don't know if it was the power of the prayer or God himself, but it just reached out, either while I was driving or walking down the sidewalk or sleeping, and it just - the power of God in Jesus just grabbed me... All of a sudden, I just believed in Jesus Christ. I did, I believed in him!” ~ Evel Knievel

Michael Nutter, the 98<sup>th</sup> mayor of Philadelphia, affectionately known as the “Big Nut,” learned how to help others from the sidewalks. “We're all in this together,” he says. “I learned that lesson growing up in West Philly. When I shoveled the sidewalk my parents didn't let me stop with our house. They told me to keep shoveling all the way to the corner. I had a responsibility to my community.”

So as you next see the sidewalks, whether you walk them, clean them, build them, or plan them, let them teach you about faith. Seek the things God can teach you as you get out of the car and walk. See them differently that you ever have.

“My favorite place,” writes Danny Meyer. “is whichever sidewalk is beneath my feet because I am just constantly fascinated by walking and looking and learning. If I’ve already walked a street five times, then the next five times I walk it looking up, and I learn something about the cornices.

To Mr. Godbold, who was a man of God, walked these same sidewalks almost 10 miles a day, lived to be a ripe old age, and was nice to all he met, “Thank you, Frank!”