

MisSion CriTikal

#21 – *Vandalized! (part 2)*

His blind eyes couldn't reveal what was happening in front of him, but his sensitive ears and nose told Ol' Tom an animal or person was there. He waved his outstretched arms out in front of him and touched nothing. Sometimes you're faced with a situation you're not sure what to do next; yell, run (not easy when you're totally blind), or play possum and don't move a muscle.

But Tom elected to do none of those things and trust God's promise to protect and provide the vision needed – whether it's physical or spiritual. Many many times he walked to his favorite quiet spot away from the ramshackle village, without incident, by walking on the trail of small twigs to the quiet edge of the clearing.

He could barely hear the heavy breathing with an occasional whimper that had to be a person, likely a teen. He broke the silence with, “Who is before me? Answer now.” “Mr. Tom, it's me, Andy. I come askin' for your forgiveness. Please.” “Stand up Andy. You don't need to kneel to me for anything.” “I do mean stuff and I don't know why. Every time it makes me feel worse, and then I think about doing something even worse. That's about when I get these awful belly cramps that pain me big.”

[>>] Stepping out of the story for a moment to note a couple disturbing mindsets of teenagers today. These are experienced even by 'normal' appearing youth that may even attend a church like yours and mine.

One disturbed teen mindset is loosely called, Preppy. Preppy teens over-dress with costly fashions normally worn by more adult business people. Emotionally they are fed up with the way the world is run, thinking they can do better. They seek leadership responsibilities in school and out, of projects and students.

Bullies are found in every sector of society and the planet, and that includes church also. Their actions and attitudes are pretty well known by all but the very sheltered from society. Bullies flourish in the digital on-line world of social networks.

The third and most grotesque group of disturbed youth are called 'Emos'. Abbreviated from emotionally disturbed. They often

wear facial jewelry, black clothes and dark cosmetics. In most cases their sleeves are long to cover frequent cuts and scars. They often listen to music with suicide themes. I once shared my understanding of the emo with a neighborhood teen.

He said I had it wrong. He explained an emo teen is full of emotional pain that won't go away and no remedies seem to exist (to the teen). The teen cuts (self-mutilates) himself/herself with this 'distracting' pain of the cut. It's not the sight of their own blood, but the ability to control this pain – this cut. In some cases this cutting is in the form of the lasting pain of tattooing and piercing jewelry.

The Bible clearly states, “Ye shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor print any marks upon you: I am the LORD.” (Leviticus 19:28)

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“Mr. Tom. I don't want to do mean things any more. And I don't want to feel afraid inside either. Yes I admit I pulled all the tent stakes out, and I'm willin' to admit to everyone that it was wrong. Is that all I need to do. Will that smooth everything out?”

“Andy, that's certainly a good start. But more importantly, you need to confess the wrong that you did, to God. To confess just means you say the same thing about the sin that God does. Remember we talked before about sin is doing and thinking things that God doesn't like. But Andy, God wants even more for you to let Him care for you and protect you through every day. He wants you to invite Him to be your Lord; your loving Master. He wants you to believe His Son Jesus shed His innocent blood on the cross for a sacrifice to wash away all your sins, Andy. And for good, too. Isn't that great?”

“Andy, how about you and I both kneel right here on the ground and I'll help you to tell the Lord what we know He wants to hear. You talk to Him out loud, just like you've been talking to me, and I'll help you, if you want.”

The old blind man that once felt so useless and of no value to God or anybody else, lovingly led young Andy to accept the same free salvation that is offered to you and someone near you.