

-The Choir Girl

DON'T
MISS
the
SONG
THAT'S
PLAYING

ROBERT H. FLORES

-The Choir Girl

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The early morning sun peeked through my curtains and into my bedroom. It was just another Sunday morning. Oh, how I wanted to sleep in after a long week's worth of work. All the reasons why I shouldn't go to church quickly rushed into my head. But, as always, God compelled me with fewer, but better reasons to go to church and worship Him. So, reluctantly, I rolled out of bed. I put on my white collar shirt and khaki pants. The house was unusually quiet, because my roommates had gone on a fishing trip early this morning. They had invited me to go with them, but I really wasn't in the mood. The stench of fish in the early morning hours never really seemed to appeal to me. I finished combing my hair and walked outside.

"What a beautiful summer day," I thought to myself, as I started my car and drove to church.

Walking up the church steps, I smiled at the same nameless faces as I always did. Having attended my current church for six years, one might wonder why I haven't gotten involved with any small groups or met any friends yet. Well, I'll tell you why: I don't like to be put into anyone's mold. The church has classes that can mold you into anything: classes to become a member, classes to find out your talents, classes for evangelism. They have classes for old people, young people, teenagers, kids, classes on relationships, classes on finances, classes for married couples and worst of all, classes for singles. I hate that word: *singles*.

It's such a lonely word. It's a word that should be reserved for inmates in solitary confinement, or, for a man in the middle of a desert. It shouldn't be used to describe people who aren't married. People feel sorry for us "poor saps" who aren't married. They feel so bad for us that they have to create seminars and field trips and church functions for people like me. It's bad enough that us un-married people are considered outcasts from society, but do churches have to emphasize that fact by getting a bunch of us together in one small room to discuss our plight? There is a lot of patronizing nonsense that goes on in those single classes, too. Nonsense such as: "It's OK to be single", or, "Single people are just as valid to the Church as married people", or, "This is God's will for your life right now". C'mon. No one believes that. The only reason "un-marrieds" take single classes is to, hopefully, find their soul mate in those classes so they won't have to be single anymore.

Well, frankly, I don't need any of that. Sure, being unmarried gets lonely sometimes, but if it was good enough for Jesus, then it's good enough for me. He was my age once. Wait a minute. No, He wasn't. How old am I again? Oh, yeah, 36. 36 years of . . . *solitary confinement*? No, that's not right. I still have God. If I didn't have Him I wouldn't have anyone.

I looked around at all the happy families. There was a couple holding hands. There was a husband and wife drinking coffee on one of the concrete benches. There was a man and a woman with their 3 toddlers over there—one of many families I might add.

I sighed.

It must be nice to find someone you can share your life with. Heck, I'll never get married at the rate I'm going. By their late twenties, all the Christian women are married and the ones that aren't married have fiancés and boyfriends. There's not much hope for people like me.

I quickly grabbed a bulletin from the greeter and offered a half-hearted "Good morning". I looked for my favorite seat, on the right side of the sanctuary, towards the middle, in the middle of the row. Thankfully, no one was sitting in "my" seat. I amused myself by thinking that it was probably the church's designated "single's seat" or something.

The worship leader stood up, "Good morning, congregation. We will be starting worship shortly. Will you please turn to page 241 in your hymnal? Let's everyone stand and welcome our guest choir this morning."

Every now and then, our church invites guest choirs from other local churches. It's a way to shake up the monotony of our same old choir week after week. This new choir started in a long procession up to the stage to take their places. There must have been 20 choir members walking up, all in different summer colors. There were men and women, young and old, skinny and chubby—all different kinds of singers. And then I saw *her*.

A brown-haired choir girl in the procession had just taken her place on the stage next to some other shorter girls in the front. She had on an orange summer dress that had flowery swirls on it. Her hair was worn down. She had to be in her late twenties. I liked her smile.

The choir began to sing; they were in complete harmony. The girl seemed to be an "alto", or is it a "soprano"? Aw, forget it. I can never get those terms straight. All I know is that *she* sang magnificently. I couldn't take my eyes off her. The choir would finish a song, take a quick break and would then start another song. Well, you may think I'm crazy for what I'm about to tell you, but it was during one of those breaks in-between songs that she was looking around at the massive crowd, looked into my section of the sanctuary, and, I kid you not, she looked *right* at me. She even half-smiled at me. After she looked away, I looked away, but my eyes kept going back to her. I knew I should've shaved this morning.

The choir finished their set of four worship songs and began to proceed down the steps into the audience. They headed down towards the right side of the sanctuary where I was sitting! To look at the girl I had to turn my head unusually to the right, away from the pulpit. So, I waited for her to come by in the procession. There she was, coming down the aisle, along with the rest of her choir. I looked to see if she would look back at me. I waited. She walked closer. I was still looking and waiting. And then . . . she walked by without even looking at me! Nothing! Not even a glance. I sunk back into my seat, embarrassed that I threw a look out there and never got a return. That look is now out in the void of space somewhere.

I couldn't see where the choir sat without embarrassingly turning my head all the

way around, so I didn't bother to. But, I knew that the choir was sitting somewhere behind me. And, in that choir, was the brown-haired girl that gave me that look on stage and completely ignored me down in the audience. I wondered if she was looking at the back of my head. (Not the most attractive part of a person, I might say).

Or, maybe I was just mistaken. Was the girl really looking at me when she was upstage? I mean, the attendance today was pretty large. Who's to say that she wasn't just staring into space? Or, maybe she was looking at someone behind me? That must be it. That would explain the half-smile she gave, too. What was I *thinking*? What made me think that a beautiful woman like her would even notice someone like me in this massive audience? There's *no way* she could have even noticed me looking at her anyways. "The look that never was" . . . I should really write a blog on that theme.

I should just forget about the girl and listen to this sermon. So, for the next 40 minutes, I did listen to the sermon, but my pastor seemed long-winded today, I mean, more than usual. He was mentioning that we should keep growing in our relationship with God, through community. God knows our troubles and heartaches and it is through other believers that He works in our lives. He wants to be involved in our lives privately, but it really is in the community of believers that He chooses to work mightily. He suggested everyone join a small group or a Sunday School class. Groan.

My pastor finally ended his sermon and asked the choir to do one final worship song. They walked past me, back up to the stage. I wondered if I should look at the girl or if I should just ignore her and enjoy the song. I decided to just enjoy the song. This *was* one of my favorite worship songs, I have to say. I would just try and forget about that brown-haired girl in the orange dress and the—

Ok. Fine. I'll just look one more time at the girl, just to make sure she's not looking at me. Well, as soon as I looked at her, *she was looking right at me again and looked away!*

I dropped my hymnal. This was freaking me out now.

The song ended, my pastor excused the congregation and everyone stood up and headed for the doors. Part of me wanted to just let it go. But, another part of me was compelling me to want to talk to her.

Everyone was fellowshiping outside. Children were running around laughing. Some people were on the steps and some were off to the side where the coffee and donuts were. I decided just to stand on the steps for a while and people-watch.

There were so many questions running through my head: Why would she be looking at me and smiling at me several times during service if she didn't think I was attractive? What if she thought I was someone else by mistake? What if she was just being friendly? What if her boyfriend was sitting directly behind me?

But then a terrifying thought did occur to me: What if she did walk out the door with her choir friends — what did I plan on saying to her? Should I walk up

to her and say, "Hey, I noticed you like to sing worship songs. I like worship songs, too." No, that's dumb.

"*Hmm*," I mumbled to myself.

What if I handed her a cup of coffee and said, "Hi, my name's Connor. I smelled this coffee and I thought of you." No. That's dumb, too. Wow, this was harder than I thought. What could I say to her? She obviously likes to sing . . . What if I asked her, "Good morning. Your voice is wonderful. How did you learn to sing?" But, then she could just answer "God" and I would look un-Christian for even asking a silly question like that.

Five minutes went by and I was tempted to either give up the mission, or, walk back into the sanctuary to see what happened to the choir. I, instead, decided to mosey on over to the coffee and donuts. At least I could blend in with a bigger crowd, and then maybe I would spot her.

I grabbed a chocolate donut and sat down at one of the many picnic benches. Looking around, I saw people discussing their Sunday plans. Some were talking about the sermon and others were discussing random stuff like sports, homeschooling, politics and the weather. Why do I always feel like I'm on the outside looking in? It's like everyone else's movie is playing and my movie is on pause.

Just then a man and his three toddlers came and sat down next to me. He was probably about my age.

"Excuse me, Sir, is there anyone sitting here?"

"No, of course not."

"Thanks."

He directed his kids, "Now Bree, you sit over there. Billy, you sit next to Bree. And, Brock you sit over here, on this side of the table with me. Here's some napkins for you guys."

He exhaled as he sat down next to me.

"That's a lot of kids," I said.

He shrugged, "Yeah, it can be challenging sometimes. But, they are definitely a blessing." He gestured over to his pregnant wife in the crowd. "My wife and I are actually expecting another one on the way."

"Wow, Congratulations."

"Thanks. Um, I'm Mike."

"I'm Connor. Nice to meet you."

"So, Connor, how long have you been coming here?"

"Six years, actually."

"Really? I've never seen you around here before," he said as he took a bite of his doughnut.

"Well, I don't really do any of the small groups or Sunday school classes."

"Why is that—just out of curiosity?"

"I don't know. I don't really fit in, I guess. I'm kind of a lone wolf."

“A lone wolf?”

“Yeah, like I do my own thing. . .”

He laughed, “I know what a lone wolf is, but my question is: why do you feel like that?”

I scanned the crowd around us, “Well, if you look around at all these people, I don’t have much in common with any of them. Most of these people are married or have girlfriends and I’m just single. There’s not much room for single people.”

He furrowed his brow and asked, “Are you being serious?”

“Um, yeah,” I muttered, as I nervously took a bite of my doughnut.

“Well, I don’t pretend to know your situation, but I do know that God’s Kingdom has room for everyone—including single people.”

“I just don’t see how that is. People like me are usually pushed to the sidelines.”

“I know it must feel like you’re missing out on something, but, honestly, you shouldn’t be rushing through this time in your life. Single people have a built-in ability to serve the Lord.”

“Well. . . I. . .”

“No, seriously, listen: this time will never come again. Just about 5 years ago, I was in your same situation. I was single and didn’t know what to do. So, I just served the Lord. I wish I would have done more, though. Anyways, one day I met my wife and, well, the rest is history. But,” he continued, “The point is: in this time in your life, when you have your whole future ahead of you, that is when you need to serve the Lord with all your might.”

“Well, I definitely want to serve Him.”

“So how are you doing that?”

“I’m a writer. I mean, I’m a technical writer for my day job. And, at night, I sometimes write stories and poems. I’ve been meaning to start a blog, but just haven’t gotten around to it.”

“There you go right there! You can witness to your co-workers during the day, and then, at night you can write about God through your stories. If you were a parent, believe me, you would have a lot less time to write.”

He just looked at his kids eating their donuts and continued, “Look, don’t get me wrong; I love my wife and kids and I am able to serve the Lord, but, when you don’t have those relationships, you are able to do things that a married man or a dad never could.”

He paused to take a bite, “Sometimes I think Christians live in a discontented mindset, but that’s only because they don’t see the whole picture. Take serving God for instance: most Christians want to serve God, like you do, but they create an artificial checklist and say, ‘When X, Y and Z are checked off in the future, then I will serve Him.’ But, what they don’t understand is that God doesn’t need anything checked off before He can use someone. He just needs a willing heart.”

“I do have a willing heart, but, admittedly, I do kind of get depressed because

of where I am in life.”

“Why?”

“Because I don’t have anyone.”

“You don’t have God?”

“No, of course I have *God*. I’m talking about a woman. I mean, I feel like I’ve been single my whole life. All my friends have gotten married and had kids and I’m, well—I’m still here.”

“Do you think God is trying to teach you something—like you should be serving him here *now* and finding your satisfaction in Him *now*?”

I paused and thought about it, “Um, yeah, I suppose so.”

Just then, I briefly glanced over Mike’s shoulder and saw the Choir Girl walking out of the sanctuary with her friends. It looked like she was making her way to the parking lot. I needed to end this conversation—fast.

“So, yeah, I probably should be trusting God more.”

“Then why don’t you seek Him? If He is your all in all then He is the only One that can give you satisfaction. He made you single for a reason. And, someday you may not be single anymore. But, right now you are. So, use your life for Him. Life is too short to be discontented and not serving Him.”

“I appreciate that. Thank you, Mike. I should get going,” I stood up.

“No problem. Nice meeting you, Connor.” He paused, “You know, you should consider joining our small group”, he paused, as he took out a paper and started jotting his address down.

He handed me the paper and continued, “We meet every Tuesday night at 7:00 PM. We’d love to have you.”

“Thanks. I’ll definitely think about that.”

“Have a good day, Connor. Remember: serve the Lord where you’re at; not where you’re not at.”

“Thanks. Have a good week.”

I grabbed my trash and emptied it. I headed straight for the parking lot, hoping to see the Choir Girl one last time. I walked down the first few aisles of cars to the left and then I started doubling back to hit the other rows of cars on the right. Nothing. She was gone.

I slowly walked back to my car, defeated, with my Bible in-hand. I glanced at the paper Mike had given me. I guess he did have some valid points. I haven’t really thought about savoring my single life.

I started fumbling for my car keys when suddenly, I looked up and saw a mini-van coming towards me. Inside the van were several female choir members, smiling and laughing. As it passed by me, the Choir Girl was smiling *right* at me, through the back window—and *waved* at me!

My heart soared. There was no mistaking it that time, because there was no one else around.

She *really did* smile and wave at me! For one fraction of a moment time stood still.

I stood and watched as the van drove away in the distance until I couldn't see it anymore.

So, now what? That's that. I'll never see her again. I mean, I suppose I could always find out what church her choir came from; that is, if I researched it enough.

I paused and looked down at Mike's address again.

Or. . . I could just let that girl be a reminder to me: a reminder that there is hope. . . a reminder that God has my future all planned out. . . a reminder to cherish the time I have *now*.

Hmm.

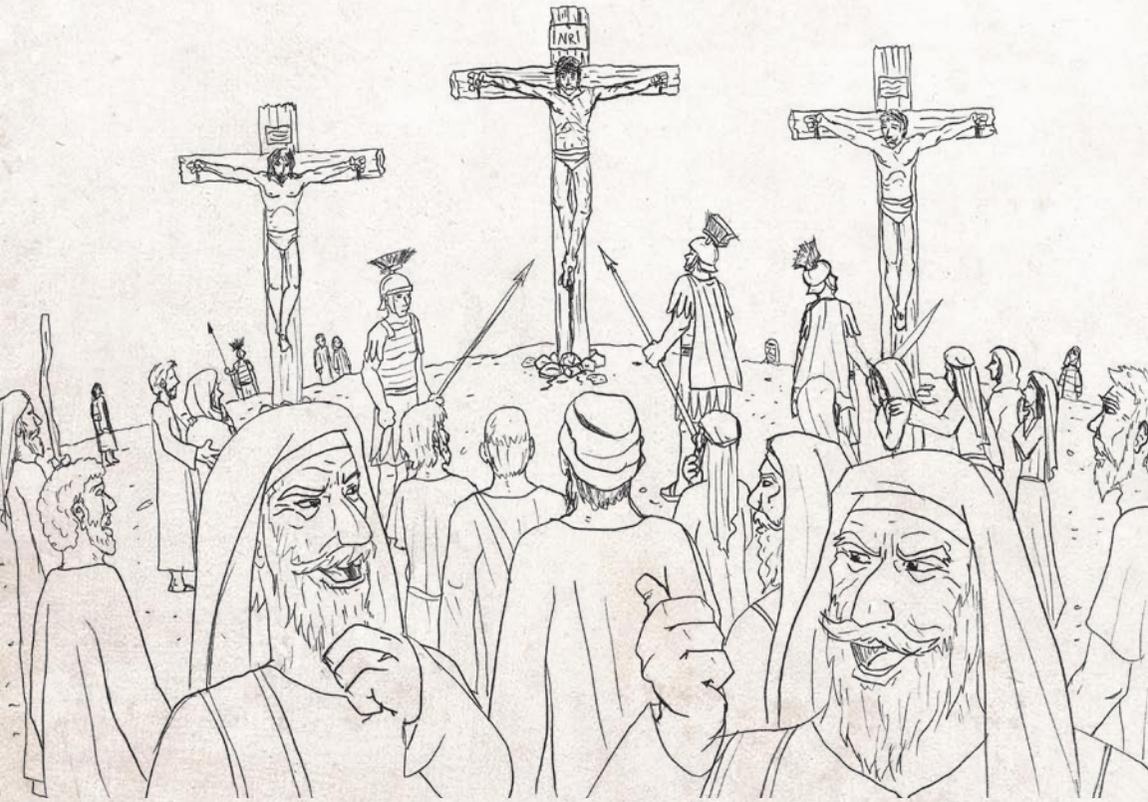
I think I'll go home and write a blog about that.

The end

"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end" — Jeremiah 29:11.

*"The LORD is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him. It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the LORD."
— Lamentations 3:25-26*

THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST



What is the Gospel?

The gospel is the undeserved salvation of all mankind from sin and eternal death, accomplished only by the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. These facts are made real to an individual's heart by the power of the Holy Spirit. In other words, the gospel is God's plan to rescue us, sustain us and grow us up in Him for all eternity. The famous passage, John 3:16, explains the gospel:

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST

The gospel's foundation is only based upon what Jesus has done; not what we have done. It is God's free gift to us. Heaven is for those who have trusted in Jesus Christ as their Savior. People think that getting to heaven is some long, drawn-out process in which you have to try and follow the Ten Commandments or be a do-gooder or go to church or something. But it's really not complicated at all. Salvation isn't about getting to God on our own terms or pulling ourselves up by our own bootstraps; it's about God reaching down to us and offering us salvation free of charge.

Paul says in Ephesians 2:4-5, *"But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved)."*

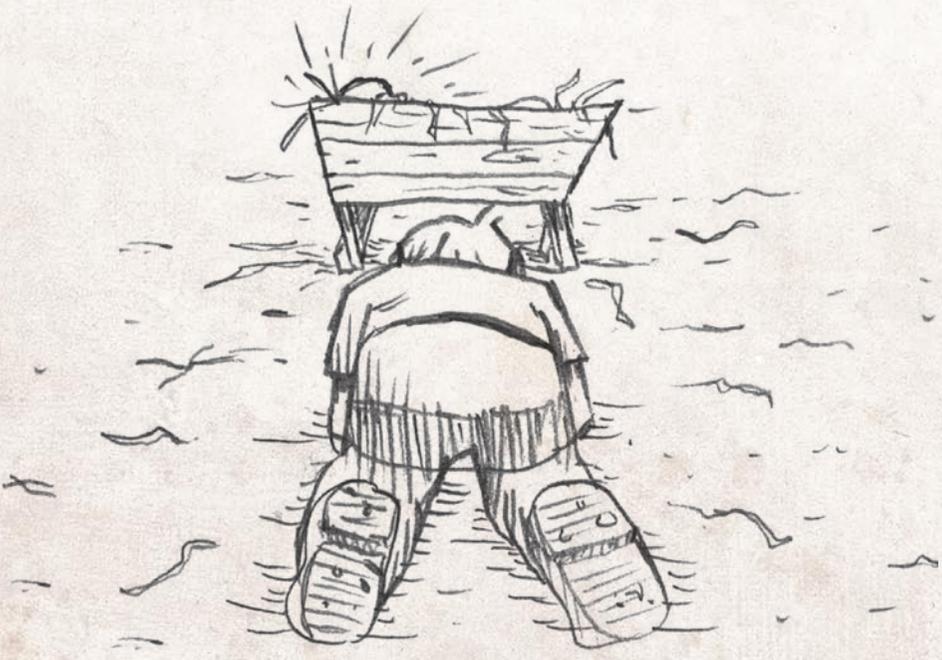
Our sins won't allow us to get to heaven on our own terms; it is only God's rich mercy that He has made a way for us. God demands no less than perfection, and only perfect people get to go to heaven. Based on works, none of us would make it; only Jesus would. But, God has provided a way to give perfection to us through Jesus. Jesus is the exclusive, one-way to the Father.

Jesus says this in John 14:6, *"I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."*

Either that statement is true or it is not. Every Christian knows that it is absolutely and irrevocably true. Ask Christ to reveal Himself to you today. It's your choice.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Robert H. Flores enjoys writing, illustrating and sharing stories about God in creative ways. He is the author of several books, booklets and tracts.

His work can be found at:

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