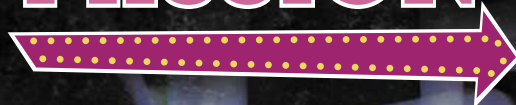




Wednesday

NIGHT

MISSION



SOMETIMES
RIGHTEOUSNESS
IS HARD
TO SEE

ROBERT H. FLORES

Wednesday
NIGHT
MISSION

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It was a cool, autumn Wednesday night. The sun had just finished setting and the breeze had picked up a bit. Seven men had just been dismissed from Men's Bible Study and were walking to the church parking lot together.

Connor asked everyone, "Hey, guys, great study tonight! Will we see you next week?"

"Yeah."

"Uh huh."

"Absolutely."

"Of course."

"Yup."

"Affirmative."

Everyone joked with Trevor, "Affirmative? Who in the world says 'affirmative'?" Laughter erupted from everyone, including Trevor.

As everyone walked to their cars, Mitch yelled to Trevor, "Hey, Trevor, you want to grab a burger with us, before you take off? We're all going to Northtown Burgers!"

"Aw, no, I can't. I have some things I gotta do."

"Man, you always have something to do on Wednesday nights."

"Yeah, my wife expects me home by Nine. I'll see you guys next week."

"OK. Take it easy, man."

While still walking, Connor turned to Mitch and asked, "Where does he go every Wednesday night? He never hangs out with us afterwards. He could easily call his wife and say he'll be a little late."

"Yeah, I know. It's kind of strange, huh?"

Mitch spied Trevor getting into his car. Mitch turned to everyone and said, "You know what guys, I'm gonna head on home, too. I'll see you all next week."

Everyone said their goodbyes.

Mitch walked briskly to his car. As he got his keys out, he waved at Trevor as he drove past him. Trevor waved back. With a turn of the key, Mitch's Chevy started and he began to take the same way that Trevor took.

Mitch thought to himself, "So, Trevor, where do you go every Wednesday night, *hmm?* It doesn't take 45 minutes to go home. What's the big secret? It's time to end this mystery."

With that, Mitch flipped his lights on and began to follow Trevor's Camry through the main streets. He made sure not to follow too closely.

"For as long as I've been coming to Men's Bible Study," Mitch thought to himself, "Trevor has never hung out with us on Wednesday nights. And it's sad, too, because we always have such a great time together—talking about what's goin on in our lives, laughing, fellowshiping. . . He could use that in his life, just like all of us can. It's not like he's an introvert—he can talk up a storm at Bible Study. I mean, I don't want to be pushy, but what's wrong with hanging out with us every now and then. It's like he has

something better do on Wednesday nights. Hopefully he doesn't recognize my truck."

A few left turns and a right, Trevor continued driving to the east side of town.

"Interesting," Mitch said to himself, "I thought you lived on the west side of town, Trevor. What are you doing on this side, *huh?*"

Mitch was stopped at a red light when his cell phone rang.

"Oh, *c'mon*," he said as he reluctantly clicked the speaker mode on, "Yes, Honey?"

"I was just wondering if you were eating food with the boys tonight."

"No, I'm actually following Trevor right now."

"Oh, just you two are eating?"

"No. I'm kind of following him without him knowing."

"What?"

"*Sigh*. . . do you remember all those times I complained to you that Trevor hasn't hung out with us on Wednesday nights?"

"Yes."

"Well, tonight I decided to follow him to see where he goes."

"Maybe he's getting ice cream for his pregnant wife."

"Oh, so that's the reason you called!"

"Yup."

"Anyways. . . I just feel like a big brother to him. I've seen him grow over the last year and, well, it's just been bugging me: what does he do that is so *important* rather than hanging out with us after Bible Study."

"So, the solution is to now stalk your friend?"

"I'm not stalking him. I'm just. . . following him to find out what his secret life is."

"Wouldn't it have been better just to come on out and just ask him what he does on Wednesday nights?"

"Believe me, Elaine, I've tried. But he just won't say."

"Well, maybe he's just a private person. There's nothing wrong with that. You know, not *everything* has to be ran by you for your approval, Mitch."

"Very funny."

"Well, then, where do you think he's going?"

"That's the part that worries me. I just have an eery feeling about it. For example, he shouldn't even be on this side of town. He lives on the west side of town."

"Mitch, sometimes things don't always appear the way they are."

"I know that."

"What if it is something bad that he's doing? Are you going to confront him?"

"Probably. I just can't sit back and let my friend destroy his life."

"Well, just be careful, Mitch, and please don't do anything dumb."

"Sure. I've gotta go. He's turning down some side streets. Love you."

"Love you. Don't forget the ice cream."

Trevor turned down the street that led to small businesses and shops. Another

right and another left. He then turned down one final street. Mitch saw Trevor park his car and then he saw. . . *it*. Trevor had just parked his Camry in the parking lot of a strip bar named “The Pleasurehouse: Gentlemen’s Club”.

“No, no, no! What are you doing here, Man?!” Mitch yelled inside his car. “This can’t be happening. I can’t believe this!”

Mitch briefly thought about texting his wife: “I was right and you were wrong”, but the situation was too serious to be texted about.

Mitch pulled into the parking lot and parked his truck eight spaces down from Trevor. He just sat there for a moment with his stomach all tied up into knots. “What am I supposed to do, Lord?” he asked himself. “Why did I have to follow him? I would rather have not known what Trevor’s secret was all about! I have to talk him out of this. I can’t let him go in there.”

He knew that time was crucial. Taking his keys out of the ignition, Mitch hopped out of his truck and slowly started walking over to Trevor’s car. Trevor hadn’t gotten out yet. He was still sitting in his car, parked under a fluorescent light.

The crunching of asphalt under Mitch’s boots never seemed so loud. As Mitch walked by the parked cars, he noticed that the place was packed. He saw minivans with “Baby on Board” signs, SUV’s with baby seats inside and cars with those “Boys: 3, Girls: 1” license plates.

“How sad that this place’s main customer base is family men”, Mitch thought to himself as his heart began to pound harder and harder.

“What am I going to say?”, he asked himself, as the cool night air hit his cheeks. Through the window, he could see Trevor getting something together in his lap. “Well, this is it.”

Having walked up to Trevor’s door, he tapped on the window.

Trevor looked up flabbergasted. He quickly rolled down his window, “Mitch? What are *you* doing here?! Did you follow me?”

“What am *I* doing here?! What are *you* doing here?! I can’t believe you! All these Wednesday nights I thought you had something better to do. . . I didn’t know you were secretly sinning!”

Trevor didn’t say a word. It made Mitch more angry.

“All these Men’s Bible Studies about “not lusting after women” or “being faithful to your wife” or being a “godly man for the Lord”—did those studies mean nothing to you?!”

“Yes, they did mean a lot to me. The Bible has changed my life, Mitch.”

“How can you say that when you just parked in front of a strip club?! How can you do this to yourself—not mentioning the fact that you’re hurting Vanessa—and sinning against God!?! How can you go into a place like this?”

“Who said I was going to, Mitch? Who said I was going to walk in there?”

Mitch paused, gathered himself, and looked down in Trevor’s lap and saw a stack of

fluorescent orange flyers. The flyers said, “Jesus Will Save You”, with a gospel message below it.

Mitch couldn’t talk.

Trevor looked up at Mitch and spoke softly, “This isn’t really easy for me to talk about, but I’m just gonna say it. Before I was saved, I used to go to places like this all the time, OK? It was the only thing that gave me satisfaction in life, or, so I thought. At any rate, one Wednesday night, I was walking back to my car and I found a flyer—like one of these—on my windshield. It said in big bold type: “Jesus Can Forgive Any Sin.” Below the heading was a short, but powerful gospel message. It was that flyer that got me thinking about God. I took that flyer home and taped it to my bathroom mirror. Every morning I would wake up to that flyer. I knew that I needed God; I needed His forgiveness. I decided I should start going to church, which I did. A few months after that, I gave my life to Jesus.”

Trevor held up one of the flyers, “Ever since then, I’ve devoted every Wednesday night to distributing gospel flyers at strip bars. It was convenient for me to do this “secret ministry” on the same night as Men’s Bible Study so I wouldn’t have to explain all of this to Vanessa. I just didn’t realize that I would be followed by one of my closest friends.”

Mitch just stood there and bowed his head in shame, “I . . . I don’t even know what to say, Trevor. . .”

“I’ll say it for you: I’m ashamed of what I used to do, Mitch, and I will never go back to who I was. The men that frequent these places—these “gentlemen”—need the truth. They are destroying their own lives and their families’ lives—one piece at a time. Who’s to tell them the way out, if I don’t?”

After a long pause of looking at the flyer in Trevor’s hand, Mitch quietly spoke, “Trevor, I—I am so sorry. . . I thought. . .”

“I know, I know. . . I should’ve told someone about this ministry. . . Maybe you guys could’ve been praying for the effectiveness of it.”

“Man, I just feel really stupid, Trevor. . .”

“Hey Mitch.”

Mitch looked up.

“Got a few minutes? I could use a hand passing these out.”

“You sure?” Mitch asked.

“Of course. After we’re done, maybe we can grab one of those burgers you’re always trying to get me to go eat.”

They both cracked a smile.

The end

Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful. But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self. For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord. Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God. — 1 Corinthians 4:15

Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment. — John 7:24

“For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.” — Titus 3:3-7

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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