

The Reward of a Storyteller

Don Bailey

When camping with Boy Scouts, the best time of the day is after dark and when the campfire is burning low. Then we can relax and reflect on the day's activity. It is story time!

I think back on my favorite storytellers. What did Cubbie Bear used to say? "Son, you just pick 'em up from where they're at and you take 'em to where you want 'em to be!" Or S. G. Norris: "You take them from the known to the unknown." Story time is when you implant your values, way of life, and most of all, your faith in God into those you teach.

Many times the scouts ask, "Hey, Brother Bailey, tell us a story. Tell us about when you were a scout!"

Well, let me tell you about the time when our troop was winter camping. It was a tradition that one troop would try to plug up another troop's chimney on their cabin in order to smoke them out. On one particular occasion at about midnight we older boy sneaked out of our cabin. We took no flashlights, nothing that made noise, nothing that reflected light, and wore light clothing so we could run fast.

It took us awhile to sneak up on the targeted cabin. It seemed that every twig that snapped sounded like a cannon going off. Finally we were just outside the main window, then going around back, then lifting up Steven (the smallest and lightest kid in the troop) to the roof. Steven was about halfway to the chimney when all heaven broke loose. Choking on smoke, the boys came charging out the door of the cabin, screaming and yelling at the top of their lungs.

It was every man (or boy) for himself. We all just turned and ran straight into the woods. We ran full speed without flashlights. You guessed it. I ran smack into a sapling. The small tree whacked me right between the eyes. When I came to, I was lying flat on my back seeing stars! Then I heard a voice shouting, "Come on, I dare you! I'll club the next guy that gets close enough!" Steven was standing over me with a club, keeping the angry troops at bay.

Needless to say, Steven and I became close friends after that night. Just like Jesus, he had stood watch over me. Jesus is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.

While telling this story I could see the boys picturing Steven standing over them in their time of need. They understood that Jesus could and would do the same thing for them.

That, my friend, is the greatest reward for a storyteller. The light of comprehension comes on to illuminate the pathway from the known to the unknown so that the individual can grow and become a stronger Christian.