

sep 3

when you think of me

i sat, with two friends, in the picture window of a quaint restaurant just off the corner of the town-square. the food and the company were both especially good that day. as we talked, my attention was drawn outside, across the street. there, walking into town, was a man who appeared to be carrying all his worldly goods on his back. he was carrying, a well-worn sign that read, "i will work for food." my heart sank.

i brought him to the attention of my friends and noticed that others around us had stopped eating to focus on him. heads moved in a mixture of sadness and disbelief. we continued with our meal, but his image lingered in my mind. we finished our meal and went our separate ways. i had errands to do and quickly set out to accomplish them.

i glanced toward the town square, looking somewhat halfheartedly for the strange visitor. i was fearful, knowing that seeing him again would call some response. i drove through town and saw nothing of him. i made some purchases at a store and got back in my car. deep within me, the Spirit of God kept speaking to me: "don't go back to the office until you've at least driven once more around the square." then with some hesitancy, i headed back into town. as i turned the square's third corner, i saw him. he was standing on the steps of the storefront church, going through his sack. i stopped and looked; feeling both compelled to speak to him, yet wanting to drive on. the empty

parking space on the corner seemed to be a sign from God: an invitation to park. i pulled in, got out and approached the town's newest visitor.

"looking for the pastor?" i asked.

"not really," he replied, "just resting."

"have you eaten today?"

"oh, i ate something early this morning."

"would you like to have lunch with me?"

"do you have some work i could do for you?"

"no work," i replied. "i commute here to work from the city, but i would like to take you to lunch."

"sure," he replied with a smile.

as he began to gather his things, I asked some surface questions.

"where you headed?"

"st. louis."

"where you from?"

"oh, all over; mostly florida."

"how long you been walking?"

“fourteen years,” came the reply.

i knew i had met someone unusual. we sat across from each other in the same restaurant i had left earlier. his face was weathered slightly beyond his 38 years. his eyes were dark yet clear, and he spoke with an eloquence and articulation that was startling. he removed his jacket to reveal a bright red t-shirt that said, “Jesus is the never ending story.”

then daniel’s story began to unfold. he had seen rough times early in life. he’d made some wrong choices and reaped the consequences. fourteen years earlier, while backpacking across the country, he had stopped on the beach in daytona. he tried to hire on with some men who were putting up a large tent and some equipment. a concert, he thought.

he was hired, but the tent would not house a concert but revival services, and in those services he saw life more clearly. he gave his life over to God.

“nothing’s been the same since,” he said. “i felt the Lord telling me to keep walking, and so i did, some 14 years now.”

“ever think of stopping?” i asked.

“oh, once in a while, when it seems to get the best of me. but God has given me this calling. i give out bibles. that’s what’s in my sack. i work to buy food and bibles, and i give them out when His Spirit leads.”

i sat amazed. my homeless friend was not homeless. he

was on a mission and lived this way by choice. the
question burned inside for a moment and then i asked:
"what's it like?"

(to be continued tomorrow)