

"The Penny"

A Good Friday Parable for Girls & Moms

A mom and her young daughter were out running errands one bright spring day. At their last stop, they got out of their car and were walking across the parking lot. Suddenly the girl shouted at the top of her lungs, "STOP!" Mom stopped. (So did all the cars pulling out.) The girl crouched to the pavement and picked up something small and brown that had looked like it had been run over a few...hundred times..

"Oh, you found a penny!" her mom said, glancing around a bit embarrassed.

"No, mom! It's pirate's gold!" the young girl exclaimed as she held it up, turning it back and forth in the sunlight.

Inside the store, the girl and her mom walked past the toy aisles. Mom tried walking by quickly but she wasn't quick enough.

"STOP!" the girl shouted -again-.

"You HAVE to stop doing that!" her mom scolded. Then she looked where her daughter was pointing.

At the end of the aisle stood a dollhouse the size of her daughter. It had all the works: a picket fence, fabric curtains, colorful furniture, and working lights--real working lights!

"That must cost a fortune," mom muttered under her breath.

"It's a good thing I have my pirate's gold, mom! I'd like to buy it today."

Mom stooped down and looked her daughter in the eyes. "Sweetheart, I'm sorry, but you don't have enough." she says with a half-smile.

"I DO have enough. I have more than enough! I can pay for it all right now!" the girl says, looking over her shoulder as her mom pulls her away.

"Come on, there are so many other important things we have to do today. We'll talk about this later."

Moms, girls, today is a special day. It's called Good Friday. Now, don't let the name fool you, it's not a day one would really call "good". In fact, it was a terrible day.

It was a day when Jesus Christ, God's Son, was betrayed by a friend. Then he was beaten and whipped with sharp, jagged whips. He was made fun of and a piercing crown of thorns was pressed onto his head. One of his best friends denied even knowing him three times. People lied about him in order to make him look guilty of things he never did. And finally, he had to carry a cross up a huge hill, only to have his hands and feet nailed to it so he could be hung from it until he died.

It was a truly terrible day, not just because these things happened, but because Jesus had never done ANYTHING WRONG. He NEVER, ever sinned. Now you might say, "But Leah, if he was God's Son, why would God let this happen to him?" That's such a great question.

See, unlike Jesus, you and I DO sin. We sin in our words, our actions, even in our thoughts. We sin everyday, many many times. It's in our nature.

On the contrary, just like Jesus, God the Father does NOT sin. In fact, God the Father is HOLY--that means completely "set apart" from us. And in our sinful state, a Holy God can't be with us...he can't have a relationship with you or with me.

God KNOWS about every single sin we think and do, even the ones we think are hidden that NOBODY sees...like girls, taking an extra cookie when your mom said just two. Or, moms, when you roll your eyes in impatience, thinking nobody's looking.

And this sin in our lives? Even the smallest sins keeps us from God--who is not just holy, but loving and good and gracious, kind, generous, really everything we could want. But God is also just, which means our sin must be paid for. He won't ignore it because he is just.

Think back to our story. The girl saw the dollhouse. It really was everything she ever wanted and MORE. But, from what we can tell, she didn't have enough to buy it. One penny? She'd have to find pennies in tens of thousands of parking lots to pay for it. That's similar to our situation with God. Our sin cost something. To a holy God, our sin cost a LOT, more than we could ever pay for. But often, like the girl in our story, we mistakenly think our tiny penny might pay for it. We think our good works, volunteering, going to church or Sunday School, or even reading the Bible will pay for our sin.



But to an entirely holy God--one who is so holy he is "set apart--those things are a mere penny. They'll never be enough to pay for all we've said and done. And because we can't pay on our own, if you or I die in our sin, we go to a place called hell, separated from God and those we love forever. That's something none of us wants.

THAT is why God sent his most precious Son, Jesus, to earth. Because only his most precious, perfect, sinless Son would be worthy enough to pay for the sins of you and me. Jesus paid for our sin on the cross.

Romans 6:23 says "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

That's what Good Friday is about...the "wages" of our sin is death and hell, but because Jesus died for us, we can have eternal life...life forever, IF we trust in Jesus' payment for our sin and NOT our penny of "good works".

So remember our little girl? What if I told you that the girl HADN'T found a penny? What if I told you that this little girl--in that dirty parking lot--found what appeared to everyone else as a penny, but really truly was pirate's gold? How would that change the story?

Well, for one, she could probably buy a thousand doll houses, right? She'd be considered the luckiest little girl in the world!

And for two, this story would teach us that what seems worthless to almost everyone might be the most precious treasure anyone could find!

When Jesus hung on the dirty, bloody cross for our sins, the bible says that people passed and wagged their heads at him. He claimed to be their Savior yet now he looked defeated, worthless, unimportant. But in reality, these people neglected to see the priceless treasure Jesus was. They failed to see how this one humble, sinless man was actually God himself in human flesh, come to save them from death and to give them eternal life.

But where they failed to see his worth, there are some who do see it. Just as the little girl stopped to pick up and take for herself the priceless coin, there are some whose eyes are searching for God and who, when they come upon the truth of what Jesus did for them, they STOP and receive this precious gift for themselves.

Sweet girl, sweet mom. Do you know the treasure that is Jesus? Have you stopped everything to pick up and know and receive the truth that Jesus Christ came to be your Savior? So many will pass by today, even at Good Friday services around the world, wagging their heads at Jesus like he's a dirty penny in the parking lot. Will you?

Will you be like the mom, dismissing the treasure and pressing on to "more important things"?

Will you be like one who thinks their good works are enough when really they're just a "penny"?

Or will you be like the girl who recognizes a true, priceless treasure when she sees it? Will you recognize that Jesus is more than enough?

I pray that today, if this is a new message for you--that your eyes will be opened to God's forgiveness because of what Jesus did on the cross for you. And if you already have him as your Savior, I pray that you'll be reminded how important it is to regularly stop, to look closely at your Savior, to remember his priceless value, and to love and appreciate him for all he's done for you.

And I pray that this truth today deepens your love for God, inspiring you to share the good news of Jesus Christ's death and resurrection with those you care for.

Friends, Jesus proved his love for you by dying on the cross for you. Remember the treasure that he is on this Good Friday. He's more than enough.



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