

Those Who Serve

March 29

Opening Prayer

Evan Hall

Communion

Charles Hall

Assist

Colin Morrison

Assist

John Story

Dismiss Services

Joe Burnsed

April 5

Joe Holloway

Colin Morrison

John Story

Olan Bacon

Kwesi Garvin



Ellabell Church of Christ



Speaking Where The Bible Speaks; Silent Where The Bible Is Silent

March 29, 2009

<http://ellabellcofhome.webs.com/>

Brother Walenty Dawidow is a minister of the Gospel who has been preaching in Poland since before the Iron Curtain fell. He was imprisoned for his faith many times. His son related this story of one of those imprisonments. It was emailed to me by a great friend. I want to share it with you. Brother Dawidow has always been a hero of mine for many years. -Joe

An 84-year-old widower, my father, Walenty Dawidow, spends a lot of time looking backwards. He recently made the observation that sixty years can really change a person's perspective on events. In reflection, he said, the times when God was working most powerfully in his life were the very darkest hours when he felt deserted and alone. And he related this story.

In the early fifties, during the Stalinist terror, Daddy was arrested and confined in the old SS/Gestapo prison in Gdansk's Old Town. He found himself in a cramped cell with twenty-nine other men, all political prisoners.

After the shock of arrest wore off, they began making each other's acquaintance and one man, a medical doctor - a nephrologist from Warsaw - emerged as the group leader. "We are not criminals" he said, "rather each of us is an expert in one discipline or another. No use squandering our time here. Let's organize some lectures and each man will teach about his area of expertise."

This was all well and good – one man was a historian, another a civil engineer, another a lawyer - until my father said that he was a theologian. (Shortly before his arrest, he had graduated from the University of Warsaw with a Master's Degree in Theology.) Well, they were not sure they wanted to hear about religion from this preacher – certainly not the religion he represented, but the lectures began.

And they did keep the men's minds off their terrible conditions, especially the hunger.

Their bread was literally crawling with worms. Some picked them out and others claimed the worms should be eaten since they provided extra sustenance. Soup was a wretched concoction of sour cabbage and rotten codfish. Daddy absolutely could not stomach it, but the doctor advised that he needed the nourishment and taught him to hold his nose while swallowing so he would not taste the vile brew. He was able to drink the ersatz coffee: though bitter, it was usually hot. After a few weeks all were wasting away from hunger.

During this time the interrogations had begun and one day Daddy was called in for several grilling hours with an NKVD officer. Of course the questions concerned the Bible, the church, faith and Christian practices. Whether the man was touched with compassion by Daddy's convictions or maliciously wanted to tempt him is not known, but at the end of the session he opened a desk drawer and took out six open-face sandwiches on beautiful fresh dark bread and told Daddy they were his to take back to the cell with him.

So, what do you think he did? What would you have done?

He went back to the cell, spread the sandwiches out on a stool and while all the men gathered around in astonishment waiting for him to devour his private bounty, he divided each sandwich into five morsels and announced, "Before we eat, every man on his knees to thank God for this food!" Twenty-nine plus one sets of knees hit the cell floor - even those of the most cynical atheist in the group, who broke down in tears.

And Daddy prayed. And then he shared his sandwiches, all six of them, with the men who did not want to know about Jesus, those who had ridiculed "religion" and were not interested in "theology" or the Bible. And the preacher's portion was neither greater nor smaller than that of his cellmates.

And after that they listened. They listened for hours and for days as he told them the greatest story ever told.

They listened because they had first seen his faith in action.

*"Show me your faith without deeds,
and I will show you my faith by what I do."*

Daddy chuckled as he ended his tale: "Jesus fed 5000 with five loaves and two fish. I only fed 30 with my six little sandwiches. But I must not compare myself to the Lord Jesus Christ . . ."

Each time I pass the building where this took place – it is on the main road through Gdansk and if you ever visit here, I will show it to you - I imagine my father locked up inside, a young man, not knowing if he would ever see his wife and son again, kneeling in prayer and never dreaming that sixty years hence he would look back and count this darkest of hours a mountain top experience of faith.

Mike and Molly Dawidow

Announcements

Save -Labels, Food Pantry Items, Change Jar, Cans, Medicine Bottles

Bulletin Board-Make sure you read the bulletin board as there are many things of interest now. The bulletin is getting too long
Meetings-tonight after evening worship

✉_mail from Nigeria (rec'd March 23, 2009)

Hello brother Holloway,

I hope you had a good weekend. It is very sunny here and the temperature is near 90. But at any rate, we thank because in some places, the weather is so severe. Thanks for your continuous prayers for my dad. His health went down again last week. I thought of taking him to another hospital, so that another eyes can see him. Well I have spent all that I have and even in debt. He asked me to email Wilma to let Windsong know his situation. I did that last week Friday. Nothing has come out yet. Sister Wilma said that there was no elder in the office as the time she got the mail. I am hopeful the Lord's will be done. Please, do keep us in prayers as you have always do. I have not been stressed like this for some time, but I think there is a great lesson God intends for me to learn. Have a great day.

Grace and Peace,

Tom