



## and that's... **The Gospel Truth!!** with Pat Corn

*a brief message of encouragement to make your day just a little bit brighter*

Now that the holiday season is here upon us a whirlwind of activities start to invade the normalcy of our daily lives. Between family, church, and social obligations our load increases and attention to detail become ever so important. Details...details...details.

Heaven forbid that every planned function not go off without a hitch. This year I didn't do the Thanksgiving dinner preparation as I have in the past. I really enjoy orchestrating it all and having it all come together just at the right moment to a glorious finale. What a challenge to have those rolls brown at just the last second! But, not this year! The "spirit was willing but the flesh was weak". I just didn't have it in me to stay up all night in preparation for a forty-five minute meal.

My good friend, Jeff Cook, tipped me off to the deal of the year at a local food store. All the Thanksgiving fixins' with an 18lb turkey for \$59.95! Hey! That was a deal!! So this year I placed the order and focused my attention on the precious folks invited to share Thanksgiving with us. Originally planned for an 11:45am pickup, I called the day after I placed the order, and in order to give myself some extra prep time, I asked that my order be ready at 11:00am instead, so I could get the contents home and on the table just before the folks arrived. Detail #1 squashed! When I got there at 11:15am, my request was still noted for 11:45am, and that's exactly when that gorgeous bird came out of their oven. Oh well, I gathered all those potatoes, gravy, green beans, rolls and pies plus a few other goodies that I amassed while waiting, and rushed home to greet our guests who had beaten me there.

Were they even aware of the delay? Why no. We had dinner on the table in fifteen minutes and consumed it with the gusto of a hound dog. I felt pretty good that my "details" didn't have me in bondage as they would have in years past. Monica and I had a great time enjoying the most important part; the folks we love and were honored to have with us in our home.

Planning and details are important but sometimes our plans are de-railed and God uses them to impact our lives in a way that glorifies Him or draws us closer to Him. He is vitally interested in every detail in our lives and can use even the most horrifying experiences of plans gone awry to eventually display His mercy and grace in our lives.

The following story is a perfect example and it is one of my favorite Christmas stories that has been verified to be a true story. I hope it blesses you as much as it has me.

"The brand new pastor and his wife, newly assigned to their first ministry, to reopen a church in suburban Brooklyn, arrived in early October excited about their opportunities. When they saw their church, it was very run down and needed much work. They set a goal to have everything done in time to have their first service on Christmas Eve.

They worked hard, repairing pews, plastering walls, painting, etc., and on December 18 were ahead of schedule and just about finished. On December 19 a terrible tempest - a driving rainstorm hit the area and lasted for two days. On the 21st, the pastor went over to the church. His heart sank when he saw that the roof had leaked, causing a large area of plaster about 20 feet by 8 feet to fall off the front wall of the sanctuary just behind the pulpit, beginning about head high.

The pastor cleaned up the mess on the floor, and not knowing what else to do but postpone the Christmas Eve service, headed home. On the way he noticed that a local business was having a flea market type sale for local charity so he stopped in. One of the items was a beautiful, handmade, ivory colored, crocheted tablecloth with exquisite work, fine colors and a Cross embroidered right in the center. It was just the right size to cover up the hole in the front wall. He bought it and headed back to the church.

By this time it had started to snow. An older woman running from the opposite direction was trying to catch the bus. She missed it. The pastor invited her to wait in the warm church for the next bus 45 minutes later.

She sat in a pew and paid no attention to the pastor while he got a ladder, hangers, etc., to put up the tablecloth as a wall tapestry. The pastor could hardly believe how beautiful it looked and it covered up the entire problem area.

Then he noticed the woman walking down the center aisle. Her face was like a sheet. "Pastor," she asked, "where did you get that tablecloth?" The pastor explained. The woman asked him to check the lower right corner to see if the initials, "EBG" were crocheted into it there, and they were. These were the initials of the woman standing before him, and she had made this tablecloth 35 years before, in Austria.

The woman could hardly believe it as the pastor told how he had just gotten the tablecloth. The woman explained that before the war she and her husband were well-to-do people in Austria. When the Nazis came, she was forced to leave. Her husband was going to follow her the next week. He was captured, sent to prison and never saw her husband or her home again.

The pastor wanted to give her the tablecloth, but she asked the pastor to keep it for the church. The pastor insisted on driving her home. That was the least that he could do for her. She lived on the other side of Staten Island and, as it happened, was only in Brooklyn for that day to do a housecleaning job.

What a wonderful service they had on Christmas Eve. The church was almost full. The music and the spirit were great. At the end of the service, the pastor and his wife greeted everyone at the door and many said that they would return. One older man, whom the pastor recognized from the neighborhood, continued to sit in one of the pews and stare at the tablecloth, and the pastor wondered why he wasn't leaving.

The man asked him where he had gotten the tablecloth on the front wall, because it was identical to one that his wife had made years ago when they lived in Austria before the war. He wondered how there could be two tablecloths so much alike. He told the pastor how the Nazis came, and how he forced his wife to flee for her own safety and how he was supposed to follow her, but he was arrested and put in a Nazi prison. He never saw his wife or his home again all the 35 years in between.

The pastor asked him if he would allow him to take him for a little ride. They drove to Staten Island to the same house where the pastor had taken the woman just three days earlier. He helped the man climb the three flights of stairs to the woman's apartment, knocked on the door and witnessed the greatest Christmas reunion that he could have ever imagined."

The details of these folks' lives were never realized. He could not follow her due to his imprisonment by the Nazis. The planned details of their escape never came to pass, but God was there all the time engineering the greatest Christmas reunion ever. Never forget that God is always there. He told us that He is Jehovah-Shammah..."I am the Lord thy God who is ALWAYS with you".

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Your comments or questions are always welcome. Email them to: [patcorn@maizeone.com](mailto:patcorn@maizeone.com)

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