



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

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

This is a particularly exciting time back in my hometown of Hendersonville, NC. It's time for the Apple Festival. That means the King Apple Parade, the final street dance, the Flat Rock Playhouse has it's final presentation, and thousands head there to buy up the incredible apple selection that grows there.

Henderson County produces the most apples of any area second only to the entire state of Washington. Seventeen million bushels a year, in the old days. Well, at least it boasted that for many years. But I would imagine that the last generation of apple families have sold off some of those beautiful orchards for a beautiful price to accommodate condos and housing developments. The apple families are well and respected in that area. They have a terrific heritage as leaders in the community and churches. Several of my old buddies are still in the apple business. In fact, we are blessed to have one of my old friends right here in Pigeon Forge. Stop by the Walden Landing complex and pay a visit to my good friends at The Atkins Orchard store. You'll find another generation of the Atkins family there providing some of the finest apple by products that can be found; delicious apple ciders, apple butters, and many other products that will light up your taste buds. But what really thrills me is the fact that another generation of the Atkins family is carrying on the "family traditions" of excellence. Those orchards have had incredible care from Adolph Atkins, Sr. and my good friend Adolph, Jr.

I enjoyed having dinner with friends from back home tonight. Glenn and Vivian Hill have been friends for decades. They have been an "item" since we were just kids. Hey, if you started dating a girl back in those days, you just hoped that your "relationship" would be as "cool" as theirs. They were the standard we all subscribed to, and still are in my opinion. Glenn does gorgeous, creative stone work and is carrying on his family tradition in stone work just as his Dad did. His work is a reflection of his father's instruction and diligent care.

Not every man has the opportunity to follow in such positive footsteps as Glenn and Dolph. Their earthly fathers passed on a legacy to them of which both have been tremendous stewards. In this day and time, many men haven't a clue as to their family heritage. Some don't even know who their father is.

I have a dear friend who once lived in Nashville. He came to the area from Philadelphia, PA back in the eighties after an incredible life experience. I'll call him Bob.

Born the illegitimate son to one of Louis Armstrong's dancers, he suffered numerous abuses from his mother at a very early age. He had cost her a European tour engagement with the orchestra and she lost a great deal of money as a result of "his" being born. At the age of four months she was putting him in the gas oven to take his life just as her sister came in and caught her, thus sparing his life. Bob lived with his grandmother and aunt afterwards, and then at the age of ten his mother ran over him in the street with a Buick crushing his hips, legs, and skull resulting in a ten month stay in the hospital. The brain damage was horrible.

His grandmother was told that he would be a vegetable the rest of his life but she took him home and prayed over him constantly asking God to heal him. Bob had to be potty trained again, learn to walk and talk, and to feed himself. With her care and prayers, Bob progressed slowly. He learned about his ministering angels and the power of his heavenly Father from his grandmother. His heavenly Father became the only Father he would ever know. Within two years he was whole again. Bob was back in the

streets playing with the other kids, just like before, even though he suffered regularly from severe headaches from the injuries.

When he reached the age of sixteen he lied about his age to get into the Army. While in the Army he began to have problems with depression and hopelessness. In Viet Nam Bob tried desperately to get himself killed. He would stand up in a hail of fire, which caused others to die all around him, without even a whistle of a bullet near him. It was as though God had a shield around him protecting him from the violence. But Bob was determined to end his life, so drugs became his way out. Not only did the heroin make him forget, but with enough ingested, he could accomplish his goal; to die. But with time, he only became sick and was discharged back to Philadelphia. He was taking in enough heroin to kill a horse, but it only made him sick.

Within a few weeks after Bob's discharge, he found himself admitted to a Philadelphia hospital at death's door. The doctor told Bob to contact his family because, at best, he had forty eight hours to live. He had no one to contact. His liver was totally sclerosed. It was hard as a football and perfectly worthless to his body. It would take him twenty minutes just to get from the bed to the bathroom!

Finally!! His desire to die was being realized butWAIT!! "Do I really want to die?", Bob asked. "NO!!" At 3AM Bob cried out to the only Father he'd ever known. "Father, you are the only Father I have ever known, and for some reason you have chosen, up to this point, not to let me die when I have wanted to die so desperately. But now, I feel like I haven't gotten a fair shake here. My mother tried to kill me and you saved me. I stood up in a hail of bullets and you saved me. I've never know any Father but you, and by all accounts, I have let you down, but I don't want to die. Please save me and let me turn my life back over to you. Please don't let me die....heal me Father, please".

The nurse came in at 8AM to check on Bob and found him at the mirror shaving. "Bob, what are you doing!?", asked the nurse. (She thought he was experiencing that euphoric high that some people experience just before death comes.) "I am about to leave this place", Bob replied. "Why you can't do that!", the nurse said. "Oh yes I can. My Father healed me", Bob replied very matter-of-factly. "Well", she said, "You not going anywhere until we do some more tests." (She thought that would be logical enough for him to swallow and he would return to his bed.) "Run your tests, but do it quickly, because I have work to do", Bob said.

He finished shaving and got back in bed. When they came to wheel him in for tests, he was smiling all the way. When the tests were finished he smiled even wider. To all of the doctor's amazement, Bob had a brand new, baby fresh liver! "Thank you, Father!", Bob exclaimed.

Bob Became involved in a dynamic church there in Philadelphia and discovered that God had given him a voice to sing. He had never sung a note before. He sounded and looked just like Nat King Cole. (Yeah, I've wondered that too.) Then God called him to Nashville where He lived for several years and ministered with that gorgeous voice and sweet spirit..

Years later, Bob began dealing with depression again and finally filled up his little Toyota Tercel, put his best suit, and headed west on I-40. The plan was to drive as far as the fuel tank would allow, and when it ran out, Bob would sit and wait to die. He ran out of gas in Tulsa, OK in the wee hours of the morning. When the sun came up, a guard tapped on his window to see if he was all right. When Bob told him the game plan, the guard urged Bob to come inside and get checked out. "Checked out?", Bob exclaimed. "I'm just waiting to die". The guard replied, "Yes sir, We all are". As Bob exited the car he then realized he had run out of gas right in front of the Oral Roberts University Hospital!!! (That's 650 miles on a 10.5 gallon tank, by the way. Hummm, a miracle there, huh?) The guard took him inside and he was admitted where within days, he was visiting other patients, praying for them and they were being healed!

The last I heard was that Bob was hired on as staff there at ORU. His job was to simply be his Father's hands extended. Bob is carrying on his Father's legacy. The only Father he has ever known.

"The effective, fervent prayers of a righteous man avails much" James 5:16

I'll never forget Bob singing these words about HIS Father with tears streaming down that sweet face

"He promised us that He would be a counselor
A Mighty God and the Prince of Peace

He promised us that He would be a Father
And that He would love us with a love that would not cease.”

And that’s....The Gospel Truth!!

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