

Her Most Unforgettable Thanksgiving

It was 1935, and our country was in the midst of the Great Depression. My mother was eleven years old and one of seven children ranging in ages from one and one-half to sixteen.

My grandfather, previously employed at the local lime stone mining company, had been laid off with the rest of the workers soon after the Depression began. To feed his family he took odd jobs whenever available. Hunting and fishing, two sports in which he had engaged as leisure, now became necessary for survival.

The family planted a garden each spring which supplied food for canning. However, this particular year had brought drought—and a shortage of food to can. Summer had turned into autumn. With each passing day my grandfather would seek work hoping that the mining company would soon reopen.

It was late November when my grandmother's test of faith occurred. The last of the canned goods had been used. All the staple items in the cupboard were gone. For breakfast that morning the children had eaten pancakes made from the last bit of flour and shortening. My grandfather, with the last piece of homemade bread and an apple in his pocket, set off with his dog to hunt squirrel for supper.

Time passed too quickly that morning. At noon my aunt Emma approached my grandmother: "Mother, what are we going to do? We don't have anything left. There's not a bit of anything in the house!" "I know," she replied, "and there's no money either. But I believe that God will provide something. I want all of you to

gather around me on your knees. We're going to pray and ask God to help us." She led her children in prayer.

When she finished, she asked her son William to bring her Bible and turned to Psalm 37:

"The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and he delighteth in his way. though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand. I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread."—Vss. 23–25.

"God will not forsake us," she said. "Let's thank Him for taking care of us and for all that He has given us." With bowed head and closed eyes she led her children in prayer again. While they were still praying, someone knocked loudly at the door. It startled the baby, and he began to cry.

My grandmother cautiously went to the door and opened it. There stood a young man she had never seen before. He looked very pleasant and was dressed neatly and modestly. "Mrs. Henry?" "Yes." "I was told you had need of this and was sent here to deliver it to you," he said, handing her a white envelope.

The envelope contained \$50, quite a substantial amount for those days. Surprised when she opened the envelope, my grandmother looked up. The stranger had gone. So she sent William running down the hill to ask the man to come back. She wanted to thank him; and to satisfy her curiosity, she wanted to ask his name and from where he had come.

William returned and said, "Mother, there is no man on the road. I've looked up and down, and there is no man on the road. I don't know where he could have

gone! “Where do you suppose he came from, and why did he give us that money?” he added. “Because God knew we needed it,” she answered. “I believe, William, that truly that man was an angel sent to us from God because we were in need.”

She pressed her son’s hand in her own and turned back toward the house, walking slowly with tears streaming down her face. To her children, all standing in the yard, she said, “Let’s get ready to go into town. God wants us to have supper tonight!”

That \$50 provided the family with enough food to last throughout the winter, and by spring my grandfather was called back to his old job. My mother told me this story when I was a little girl. I have told it to my own children, and I hope they will tell their children how a simple act of faith brought a messenger from God!

—Mary Murphy Kible