**GOING THE SENIOR MILE**

**Part 2 of “Going The Second Mile”**

Have you ever heard the story of Louis Braille, or Fanny Crosby? If not, stay tune.

Yesterday I wrote an article from Matthew 5:41. “*And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two*.” I’m so focused on that principle that I felt it needed some more “mileage.” (pun intended)

It’s no surprise to all of you, and it’s certainly no surprise to me, that I am growing older. I see it in the mirror (whenever I have the courage to look), and feel it in my exercise routine (ever heard the sounds that Rice Krispies make when milk is poured on them? snap – crackle – pop!). It’s nostalgic for me to remember back when I was tall, dark and handsome, along with being healthy, wealthy and wise. Ok, ok, that’s not nostalgic, that’s delusional. But please work with me here.

For those of us now at SS age (65 and counting according to the Social Security Admin), it is sometimes tempting to retire not only from work, but from contributing to the kingdom of God. Some of us allow discouragement and depression to set in and it becomes easy to think that life has passed us by. We become bitter. Arthur, and his cousin Itis, move into our joint and they turn our attitudes to become negative. Living with walkers or wheelchairs can make complainers. The younger generations do not see us growing old cheerfully, but bitterly. Seniors, we have a job to do.

Yes, there is another way, a better way, to approach a life of aches and pains, or of limited mobility, or other handicaps. ***Live life in the Second Mile***! Refuse to give up on life and determine you are going to be used by God no matter what. Make Paul your hero, and your example. Racked with a body that had been through every torture you can imagine (go ahead, read 2 Corinthians 11:22-33 and tell me you have troubles, I dare you). Stonings. Beatings. Imprisonments. Shipwrecks. Deaths often. Ouch! And yet, what did he do in all those situations? Made lemonade out of lemons. Some of our New Testament was written in blood, not ink, from dark dungeons and dirty prisons. When chained to a Roman guard, he taught his captive audience the gospel. He converted a jailer due to his “second mile” positive attitude by singing psalms while in prison stocks (Acts 16). Some in “*Caesar’s household*” even became Christians (Philippians 4:22).

We wake up with aches and pains that can lead to gripes and grumbles if we let them. Instead, read Titus 2:1-4. Our job is to be Mentors to the younger generations. History is full of names of men and women who have conquered their limiting circumstances by living the Second Mile principle. I promised you the story of Louis Braille and Fanny Crosby. Here they are.

As a young boy Louis Braille was blinded when he was accidentally poked in the eye with a leather awl in his father’s workshop. Infection set in and it spread to the other eye, causing total blindness. He went to a school for the blind, excelling in his studies with a positive attitude. At 12 years of age while in school he met Charles Barbier who had invented night writing for soldiers to “feel” letters cut on paper so they could read in the dark. He took Barbier’s idea and developed an alphabet for the blind to read, using their fingers. Even though the Braille system was not accepted until after his death it eventually caught on, blessing the blind all over the world with freedom to now read and write. It’s an interesting side note, the very tool that Louis Braille used to develop his alphabet was a leather awl, the same device that blinded him as a child! His handicap did not make him bitter, but better.

Frances (Fanny) Jane Crosby lost her eyesight at six weeks of age by a doctor’s mistake. She later discovered it was his carelessness and oversight that led to her blindness. She could have lived as a “victim” at her misfortune but she determined to go the second mile and forgive him and live her life to the glory of God. Instead of being bitter, she opted to be better. She determined to be a teacher for the blind and help the poor and disadvantaged in New York City. At an early age she became a prolific poet, soon becoming known as “The Blind Poetess.” But her real success came when she turned her skills to writing hymns for music writers like Robert Lowry and William Doane. She soon became known as “The Queen of Gospel Hymns.” In her 94 years on earth she wrote over 8,000 gospel songs. We sing many of them today, like:  
*Near The Cross, Praise Him Praise Him, I Am Thine O Lord, Blessed Assurance, Redeemed, Rescue The Perishing, He Hideth My Soul, To God Be The Glory,* etc.

**Application:**

Jesus shocked the Jewish world in His famous Sermon on the Mount when He said,

*“For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.”*

Scribes and Pharisees were notorious First Mile types. They prayed three times a day (but no more). They gave 10% to God (but no more). They dutifully went the first mile out of compulsion, but never went the second mile out of love for God and blessings to others. Our righteousness must exceed theirs. Only Second Mile saints get to heaven because only when we do things out of a spirit of love for God and for our neighbors do we exhibit the attitude of Jesus Christ. Second Milers, and they alone, “*enter the kingdom of heaven*.”

We who are *Senior Citizens* must also show the younger generations the example of what it means to be *Second Milers* by our cheerful attitudes and determined mindset to be “*faithful unto death*” to receive our “*crown of life*” (Revelation 2:10). Let those of us from the Silent Generation (1925-1945) and the Baby Boomers (1946-1964) show the Gen X’ers (1965-1979), the Millennials (1980-1994), the Gen Z’s (1995-2012), and Gen Alpha’s (2013-present) how to grow old gracefully. Challenge yourself with a Second Mile spirit of cheerful service both to God and your fellow man. Let’s go the Senior Mile! With our croaking raspy voices let us joyfully sing:

“Farther along we’ll know more about it, Farther along we’ll understand why;   
 Cheer up, my brother, live in the sunshine, We’ll understand it all by and by.”