

Desperate Life of a Child

Desperate Life of a Child is one of many case studies I have compiled over the years involving a family I ministered to some fifteen years ago when I first began working with Walking Faith Ministry. The participants have long since left the Houston area and one is since deceased. The accounts are factual but the names have been changed for the privacy and protection of those remaining. This is a very short capsulated summary of the events with which I want to draw some conclusions as to the nature and work of our ministry.

Tommy was a ten year old boy I met in an apartment complex in southwest Houston in the fall of 1996. He was a skinny dark Hispanic kid that had a nervous twitch with his fingers and seemed to be constantly picking at himself and cutting and tearing up objects. His family lived in a small apartment comprised of his younger sisters Alice eight and Judy six along with their mother Mary about 36 years of age and her boyfriend John about 52 years old at the time.

Predictably, John was unemployed and living off Mary's welfare SSI payments. After reaching out to the family the kids began coming to the Children's Activity Center where they began to receive Godly counsel and love every Saturday morning. Strangely, every time John and Mary came with kids on Saturday they got involved in some sort of fight. This went on for some time but eventually by the grace of God Mary got saved and gave her life to Jesus along with the kids. However, John remained detached and distant.

One weekend I asked Tommy to take up the offering at our Sunday Church service and he did but after the service the money and check offerings came up missing. I later received a call from Mary telling me that her son Tommy had stolen the money as she had found some of the checks he couldn't possibly cash on his floor in his bedroom. I thought it was funny that he didn't even bother to hide them. She commented, "He is a bad boy I don't know what to do with him he is a problem with our family can you help him?"

I confronted Tommy and told him I knew what he did and asked him why he did it. Looking at the ground blankly he said, "I bought a rabbit." Dumbly I responded "a rabbit?" There was no response further from him. We prayed together and I told him I was not angry with him but I disciplined him by having him do service projects.

The following week I went to his house to visit the family as we normally do from the Children's Activity Center and Mary, Tommy's mother, answered the door half naked makeup and eye-

liner washing down her face with tears and stammering in unintelligible Spanish. Looking in the back room I saw John (the boyfriend) standing up leaning against dresser drawers with his elbow staring blankly at the wall as if focused on something in the distance. I asked to break the silence, "What's going on here?" Without hesitation he said in a low eerie monotone voice. "I molested the girls." It was hard to really believe what I just heard much less to look at the other faces of the children in the room. After a moment I collected myself best that I could and queried, "You mean you had sex with the girls?" In the same monotone voice he replied, "Yes." I want to end here and draw my conclusions on this matter.

First, Tommy wasn't the focus of evil in his family his mother and her boyfriend were. **His theft was an act to gain attention to expose the evil in his family and to bring a nightmare he had been living in to an end one way or the other.** The fact of the matter is he wanted to get caught. Though wrong as it was to steal in his mind it was the only thing available for him to do. John was the molester of the two female children and his mother Mary was in collusion because she said nothing at the time to help them. Tommy's purchase of the rabbit was normal for a kid his age. Probably a denied request the parents used as punishment.

When we see this behavior in kids there are almost invariably sick parents present in the home that need help. While I know this case study is not applicable in all children's lives in the inner-city I think it explains quite a few of them. **Kids who perpetrate these behaviors like Tommy are screaming for our help in the worst way.** While some of you may be shocked that this kind of thing happened in this family it is unfortunately all too common. Over the past fifteen years I have seen, heard and witnessed this kind of thing to various degrees in some cases even worse than this. Why does this evil happen and why are the children its main targets? That answer is, I really don't know. **But I do know we have a whole generation of broken children and their families on our hands that need the love and forgiveness of Jesus Christ.** Someone must share the Bible with them and lead them back to God. (Romans 10:14) I often think about what might have happened in Tommy's family if someone from our ministry hadn't knocked on his door. That's why we are going to knock on more doors and keep knocking. There will always be more kids like Tommy out there. We need to be there for them. I believe that's one of the biggest reasons why you support this ministry financially and why you pray for us. That's your part and something we can't do. Thank God for you.

Pastor Scott



"How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher?" - Romans 10:14



Epilogue to Desperate Life

It was four months before the writing of Desperate Life of a Child, and the motivation to do it, that I received a knock on the door of my office. I opened the door and it was Tommy. I hadn't seen him in fifteen years he was now a 25 year old man of some muscular size. He sat down and told me that he had boxed professionally and won a number of fights before breaking his hand in an offshore drilling platform accident. He explained that his sister Alice was happily married to a professional musician and singer and they had one child while Judy graduated with honors from high school and is competing in collegiate level sports and doing quite well in her church singles group. Mary, his mom had received counseling and lots of support from church friends has married and is taking care of step children and serving in her church. While, John after serving a number of years of a forty year prison sentence for molestation of a child died of leukemia.

Tommy asked me to pray for him about an alcohol problem he was struggling with and that he himself was also considering marriage. **Even though our time together was short he was happy to see us that the ministry was still here for him after all these years.** I think he was kind of surprised we were still here. Tommy told me he had forgiven John and that John asked for forgiveness before his death. It was like a miracle seeing him after all these years. The Lord is so good!



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The Children's Activity Center – Children's Activity Truck, part of Walking Faith Ministry, is a non-profit, faith-based organization dedicated to sharing the love of Jesus Christ to children and their families in Houston's crime and poverty ridden inner-city. We use a number of colorful fourteen-foot storage trucks converted into portable stages to bring weekly presentations of the gospel in skits, dramas, puppetry, and video, right to the very doorstep of the children who most desperately need it. Weekly visitations to the homes of attending children helps us share the life changing message of Jesus with the entire family. Donations matter and are tax deductible. Donations can be made through our website via Pay Pal.

Senior Pastor: Scott Binkley Administrative Director: Gilda Duncan

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