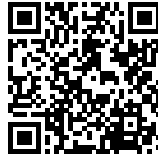




NAHUM THE CARPENTER

CHAPTER 4

Posted on July 1, 2018 by John Thomas Percival



Ruth and I were now having regular dinners and discussions with Isaac. I am amazed at what has happened to our lives.

To return from over two months away and find a crippled friend manning my shop was the first shock! Then to find out what a fine job he had done was another surprise. Then Ruth and I were pleased when we started talking about Jesus to find that Isaac was maybe even more interested in the stories than we were telling them. He could not hear enough!!! Our lives were changing.

With these changes we decided to hire Isaac as a full time employee. He was sort of like having a retired uncle around!! He would help in the shop, he would talk and teach our boys and even look after them when we wanted to go out. It was working so well I was afraid it was too good to be true.

I am going to jump ahead over one year now, much has happened during this time and maybe I can tell you about it some other time. Now I want to bring you up to date on Isaac and our boys.

As a father you always wonder what your children will do with their lives. You can teach, show, demonstrate, and lecture but the final decision is theirs.

My two boys are very different. The eldest son, Ezra, is like me he loves to work with his hands. I was so pleased one day when I saw him chatting with Isaac at the shop.

My second boy Ezekiel is more interested in reading and listening to stories from leaders and teachers about this man Jesus.

One day Isaac asked me if he could chat with me about our boys, of course I replied, please come for dinner after work today.

Isaac began by saying he has spent a lot of time with Zeke lately and he thought we should consider sending him to a school that was geared for scholars rather than a general education. He suggested some but they were run by the Jewish brethren and perhaps with our new Christ People beliefs it may not be a good idea? We thanked him and promised to consider his suggestion.

He then started talking about Ezra and how he had been working with him at our shop whenever I was away. He told us that Ezra was a very talented boy who had retained the same work ethic and talent as his father; he then laughed and said except he works faster!!!

He suggested that in the near future I should ask Ezra to assist me so I could evaluate his progress. Isaac said he would tell me when that time was, and of course I agreed.

A few weeks later I mentioned to Isaac that a merchant in Emmaus had just placed a large order for sandals, heavy wicker baskets and leather purses and I could use some assistance, did he think I

should ask Ezra, he said yes, he is ready.

That night at dinner I asked Ezra if he could stop by the shop on his way home from school tomorrow as I could use some help. He was excited when he went to bed.

I was excited all the next day too, I had no idea what to expect, but I was looking forward to seeing my son follow in my footsteps as I had done with my father.

When he arrived from school, I sensed that he was excited and nervous, I too was trying to maintain my composure as I too was wondering how my son would do at his first day on the job???

We were both very relieved once he started! I said to Ezra, look, I know this is your first time working with me so I will make it easy for you, you can start by cutting those leather strips the same as the sample. He said Dad, if it is ok with you, I would rather assemble those sandals you have lined up there ready to be sewn! I said ok if you are able to do that.

Once he started I was shocked and amazed and so proud, all at once! Isaac had done a wonderful job of training him! His fingers were very nimble, but strong, his instincts as to the progression of the assembly were far ahead of his young years. In no time he had the first sandal assembled! I inspected it and thought this is better workmanship than mine!

He continued for the next three hours and I was so proud of him, I could hardly wait to tell his mother, his brother and Isaac, who would all be at home when we arrived.

We enjoyed a very happy evening, and Zeke topped it off with his comments! He is so like his mother, able to chat with everyone, confident and I understand is becoming a very good public speaker, even taking part in some of the Christ Peoples services. He has a good sense of humour too.

He said, Dad, I don't want to offend you, and I am so glad that Ezzie enjoys working with you, but I want you to know that I will never, ever be working with you and that smelly leather you work with! We enjoyed a laugh and I told him not to worry, that my own brother chose to work with numbers rather than join my dad and me in the shop. I also told him that I knew he would make us proud one day too.

We went to bed as a happy family.

I mentioned earlier about our boys changing so fast in one year. It is such a blessing to his mother and me to see our two sons growing into responsible young men. Although very different in character and abilities, they both seem to have that warm loving spirit that we were learning about from the Christ People. Loving your neighbour was one of the most important teachings that we were really working on in our own lives, and the boys seemed to want to be the same kind of people. Very rewarding for the parents.

Last weekend we celebrated Ezra's eighteenth birthday. It was very nice to have Aunt Zilpah and Uncle Joshua and two cousins join us along with many of the boy's friends.

We are so proud of our boys as they become men! When Ezra completed his lower schooling we decided it would be a good idea if he went one more year and studied accounting and Nezikin , which deals with civil and criminal law. This proved to be a very smart move as Ezra and our business benefited from this knowledge. When your books are in good shape you do not have to worry about the tax collectors. We have had no problem with them.

Meanwhile, Ezekiel is continuing with his studies with the Christ People leaders. These Christian men are business men and leaders in their communities. They are well educated and intelligent. They are also from different countries. One thing I am really proud of Ezekiel for is that he learning four different languages: Aramaic, Latin, Italian and Greek. Not sure how? But he finds it very easy to learn languages. Our boys are making Ruth and me very proud parents. Thanks be to God!

It has been almost twenty years since that man Jesus was crucified then rose from the dead then forty days later left earth to go back to heaven to be with his Father.

During those twenty years his word or gospel as it is called has spread across our country as his disciples preach in homes in what people are calling Churches. Some of his disciples are even going to other countries to preach his gospel.

Last night Ezekiel came home and seemed very serious and in deep thought? We did not say anything to him, but later he asked if he could speak to both of us.

He said he was being pulled by something inside him (was this that Holy Spirit at work??) to go on a trip with one of Jesus disciples. We asked him to continue.

He said he was torn at leaving his family for a long time and going to a strange land, but a man by the name of Paul was going to Greece, Corinth, actually to start up new Churches and he was looking for helpers. I have been learning Greek from a man called Aleksandre so I would be able to help Paul with not only with preaching and teaching but with the language too.

We hugged our son in a three-person embrace and with tears in our eyes we said we would be the proudest parents in all of Jerusalem if you were to go on this trip. We will miss you, but we love you and we want you to do that which makes you happy. We also believe that because you have this inner feeling pulling at you that it is God asking you to go and spread the word. We said we would invite his aunt and uncle and some friends and have a little going away party for him on Saturday.

On Saturday our two boys rose early and went for a ride on Ezra's two horses he had recently

purchased. He is boarding them at a friend's farm not far from the shop. When they returned Ruth had prepared a wonderful breakfast for all of us. We enjoyed this meal so much, and it would be the last time we ate breakfast together for some time.

That evening twenty four people enjoyed some great food and wine and gave Ezekiel their blessings and best wishes for a safe and successful trip. Ezra had made Zeke two new pair of sandals and a leather bag for his belongings. His aunt and uncle brought him some of their best wine for him to take with him. Many people gave him shekels to help pay his way it was a wonderful evening. We were so proud of Zeke when he stood to thank everybody and ended by saying a few words about Jesus and how he would be sharing these same words in Corinth. Typical of Zeke, he ended by saying a few words in Greek, nobody understood, but everybody laughed and enjoyed it.

It was the perfect type of occasion to say good bye to a loved son as he left for a distant country to spread the word of Jesus Christ.

The photo shows, "And He Wept Over It," by Enrique Simonet, painted in 1892.

