

Copyright 2024 by Ron Knight and 81 Minute Books.

All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the written permission of the publisher and author/illustrator.

Cover Art and Layout by 81 Minute Books.

For information regarding permission, email Ron@RonKnightEntertainment.biz

☆☆☆☆☆ “This story will inspire you to become wealthy using faith and reading for fun!”

81Minute Books Presents

“Dear God, My Family is Broke. Can You Help?”

Preview

Written by Ron Knight

Part 1

It’s difficult to believe a crumpled piece of paper with nine words would impact Allen’s life to the point where he’d become spiritually wealthy and achieve his dreams.

Nevertheless, that’s exactly what happened.

Allen was forty-eight, single, and struggling as a poet and artist. He worked in a bookstore three nights a week unloading the truck full of books.

During his off days, he attempted to write a few poems, draw a couple of pictures, and made at least one submission to a newspaper, or magazine. This started about twenty years ago and nothing from his routine has changed other than working different odd jobs throughout his life.

Every Sunday morning he arrived at church at the same time, early enough to chug a cup of coffee, shake hands with a few people and make sure to get his same seat three rows from the pulpit on the right side of the church.

However, this Sunday, a crumpled piece of paper had disrupted everything he had done up till this point...and everything he would become.

~

Allen arrived at church and parked his broken down red Ford Ranger. The truck shook, rattled and stalled randomly as if it were throwing a tantrum.

As Allen approached the steps to the church, he noticed a teenage girl standing to the side, gazing at the front doors. In her hands was a piece of paper that she held as if she were about to give a speech.

Several people passed by, entered the church, anxious for a morning of worship. Allen took a few steps up, but suddenly stopped.

Did anyone notice this girl staring at the front doors of the church? Two more people passed by, then a family of six, followed by an older woman.

Allen hadn’t seen the girl before. He took one more step up as a younger couple brushed by him.

Time slipped away. He might have to skip his cup of coffee if he didn't get moving. Plus, he could lose his prime seat with a terrific view of the pastor.

After taking in a deep breath, Allen decided to get inside. He hurried up the last step, then noticed the girl crumple the piece of paper in both hands and toss it towards the church.

She turned, jogged down the steps and ran at full speed across the parking lot.

Allen watched her climb over the fence, hop down to the sidewalk, barely look as she raced across the street, then ran up the porch steps of her house and disappeared inside.

A volunteer picked up the crumpled piece of paper. "Kids these days. No respect." He tossed the balled up paper in the garbage can and returned to his post, greeting the last few people rushing into the church.

A family of three boys and a girl, all around middle school and high school age, hurried up the steps with their parents, each skillfully looking at their cell phones and drinking Starbucks at the same time.

One-by-one they tossed their drinks with about a quarter remaining in the cup into the garbage can.

Allen had yet to move. Something kept him from entering the church. Would he sneak into the back row this week? Maybe his regular seat was still available?

He then envisioned the garbage, soaking wet with six unfinished Starbucks, draining its brown liquid on the crumpled paper, leaking to the bottom, staining just about everything in its path.

"Allen," the volunteer said.

Allen couldn't remember the guy's name, even though he had seen him every week for years.

"What's up?" Allen managed to ask.

"You coming inside? The service already started."

"Yeah, I'm coming." Allen's eyes shifted to the garbage can, then across the street to the house. All he could think about was what had been written on the piece of paper.

A prayer request?

God sees all. He knows what was written despite being crumpled and thrown into the garbage, forever destroyed by expensive, unfinished lattes.

The volunteer had gone inside. Allen could hear the first song coming to an end. He was missing church because he's staring at a garbage can.

Move! He told himself. *Get inside before you miss the entire service!*

His week would become unsatisfying without the refreshing charge of church. Allen imagined all the problems he had with bills along with working hard at a job he hated. Without church this week, dealing with those problems would be disastrous.

He also needed church to keep him motivated. His poems were comparable to the wasted Starbucks in the garbage can...really good, but eventually just thrown away and surrounded by trash.

Allen smiled to himself, rubbing the back of his neck, now frustrated. The second song was already in its chorus. Should he even bother going inside?

“Of course!” Allen said to himself. What the heck was his problem? Place one foot in front of the other, open the door, go inside, and give God your best during what was remaining of church.

Allen forced his legs to move, reached for the door, but felt as if a twenty-pound weight had been tied to his wrist. He couldn’t keep his eyes off the garbage can.

Was he really about to go digging inside to find a piece of paper that was most certainly destroyed by now?

No! Get into church! Sit down before the pastor sees you sneaking in!

His mind sounded like a drill sergeant. *Move! Get inside, boy! What is your malfunction!*

The echo of singing and praising from inside the church had transformed into silence. The pastor was most likely giving a prayer and preparing to begin his sermon. Perhaps he’s speaking a word of hope to all who needed a blessing today.

“I need a blessing!” Allen said himself. He suddenly felt nauseous. His body ached from his job of unloading heavy books in the bookstore. He felt guilty about not paying his bills, along with not paying back the people he’d borrowed money from over the years.

He wanted to write poems. Draw amazing pictures. Have enough money to survive. Was that so much to ask?

What are you doing! (Screamed the drill sergeant in his head.)

His entire Sunday was ruined, all because he couldn’t walk up a few steps, get inside, pour a cup of coffee, chat with a few people, and sit in the same seat he had every Sunday, week after week!

Dejected, Allen turned and decided he’d better just forget about going to the service.

Nevertheless, it wasn’t that simple. The garbage can wouldn’t let him walk away. It was a silly thought, yet, he still couldn’t move as if being held by chains.

Allen jogged to the garbage can, lifted the lid, praying the crumpled piece of paper would still be readable.

Maybe God needed him to bring the paper inside and give it to the pastor? God could be depending on Allen. Instead, he had wasted time on the steps, debating what to do next, arguing with himself like a psychopath.

Some of the Starbucks had tipped over; its contents melted down through the garbage. Allen reached in, carefully moving things around, but the more careful he was, the more he spilled liquid inside the garbage bag.

He decided to be aggressive, reach in, and dig for the ball of paper.

Where was it? Why wasn’t it on top, or at least just under the cups of Starbucks? Did it really fall through to the bottom?

Figures.

Allen took a quick look around, making sure no one was watching. All he needed was the volunteer who held the door to come walking out and see Allen sifting through the garbage.

How embarrassing.

Allen continued digging into the garbage despite it smelling like sour milk spit up from a baby.

When Allen was about to give up, his fingers blindly felt the piece of a balled up paper. He squeezed it into his hand while the remains of Starbucks drizzled down his wrist, arms, onto his shirt.

Allen paused for a moment, gazing at the paper. "Please don't be ruined," he prayed.

The ball of paper was actually dry. Allen had never been so happy to find a piece of garbage, nor had he ever put this much thought into the variables inside a garbage can.

He carefully unrumpled the paper as if it were an ancient scroll. The nine words had been written with blue pen.

*Dear God,
My Family is Broke.
Can You Help?*

To be continued...

You have completed 9 minutes of this book.