

MASSAGES & CIGARETTES...IN CHURCH

7/12/2020 (Dream)

My friend and I walked down a street that had old buildings that shared common walls, like what you sometimes see in Europe. There were no markings on the buildings to indicate what was inside. We stopped at one building door and, out of curiosity, decided to go inside. It turned out to be a church.

I wanted to sit in the back but my friend made a beeline to the front. The first pew was completely filled so she found 2 empty seats for us in the 2nd row. So we sat down and I glanced over to the right at another grouping of pews, which were perpendicular to the ones we sat in. To my amazement, the congregants all had their eyes closed, but they were not sleeping. They were receiving shoulder, face and head massages from others who stood behind them! My eyes were drawn to one particular massage giver who I recognized as a homeless man that I knew, named Billy. I watched as Billy would perform the massage technique on himself first, to gauge its effect. Then if the effect was good, he would do same technique on the recipient.

Then I noticed a very familiar smell that seemed out of place in a church – cigarette smoke. Someone had lit up inside the church! I asked my friend if she smelled smoke and she shook her head no. Suddenly the man directly in front of me pivoted in his seat and said “Do you smell cigarette smoke?” I said “Yes. And my sniffer is pretty good. I know smoke when I smell it”. Suddenly he gave me a quick kiss. Then he got up and left the church. **End of Dream**

I woke up laughing at that one! The Lord certainly does have a sense of humor. But the underlying message is a serious one. The man who kissed me was Jesus. The people getting massages in the pews and those smoking cigarettes inside the church are those who are seeking solace in all the wrong places. The massage recipients were getting comforted by other people and by worldly comforts. The smokers could not even wait to leave the building before lighting up. Jesus wants us to come to Him for the comfort we need. Notice how Jesus was actually in the same room as them. All they had to do was to seek him directly.

In John 16:33 Jesus said “***in ME*** (Jesus) you might have peace”. He doesn’t say we will ever find it from the world. In fact He says “In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.” So if we seek to fill the dry places of our soul with worldly solutions and self-help, it won’t work.

I know so many Christians who are seeking worldly comforts to deal with their pain. I see some turning to antidepressants. Others drink. In fact, I used to be one of them. I would comfort myself for hours on end by binge watching TV shows. Or I would read a mystery novel straight through to escape my pain. Sometimes I would consume an entire box of mac and cheese or an entire pizza by myself in one sitting to self-medicate. If the pain was especially great, I would double medicate by binge watching TV while

binge eating. I had all sorts of worldly solutions to deal with the pain. But a spiritual issue cannot be solved with worldly solutions. They work for a moment, but the comfort is transitory and fleeting.

One day I was crying out to the Lord over someone who had betrayed me. I wept for a long while, pouring out all my pain and anguish. After I got quiet, the Lord gave me the following visions. First, I saw an eye. Then I saw an elevator with no walls just grates, moving up from the 1st floor of a department store to the 2nd floor. I had a knowing in the spirit that the elevator was actually a "lift", like what they call elevators in England. So I knew the Lord was saying to me "I LIFT UP". So I pondered that message for a bit. Suddenly I began to feel the most wonderful sensation in my heart, like peace and joy and excitement all rolled together. I think that was the first time I realized tangibly that the Lord can give peace and comfort. He can truly lift us up out of our pain and distress and bring peace to our thirsty souls.

My heart is heavy for the people in the church in my dream. They were His people, but they did not turn to Him for their comfort, but to the world. And the irony was that their true source of comfort - Jesus - was right there. Accessible. Close by. All they had to do was to reach out to Him.

Scriptures

John 14:16 And I will pray the Father, and **he shall give you another Comforter**, that he may abide with you forever; 17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

John 16:33 These things I have spoken unto you, **that in me ye might have peace**. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

James 4:10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and **he shall lift you up**.

Isaiah 55:6 Seek ye the LORD while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near:

Proverbs 18:24 A man who hath friends must show himself friendly; and **there is a friend who sticketh closer than a brother**. (That would be the Holy Spirit).