

A bum in the rain

When I was little, I stayed with my grandmother. It was late morning and there was a heavy rain. Through a window, Grandmother and I watched a hobo (most people said, “bum”) walking east along US 64, which ran right next to our barn. The hobo, old and bearded, footsore and weary, entered our barn. Grandmother said, "That old man needs help, come on, we'll fix him a sandwich." There was coffee left over from breakfast and she put a fire under it. While it was heating, she made an egg sandwich, or was it bologna? She put it on a plate with a hot cup of coffee, covered it, and said to me, "Take this over to that poor old man." I walked through the rain, carrying the plate, and entered barn. The metal roof was roaring as the rain pounded it. The hobo was lying on the ground, asleep in the straw, but he sat up when I walked over to him. I said, "My Grandmother made this for you," and handed him the plate. He lifted the cup of the coffee, slurped it, and sighed, "Oh, that's good, thank you." I noticed his hands were dirty and wrinkled, like his hairy face. He smiled at me.

I told him, “Grandmother says to leave the dishes in the barn when you’re through’.” He smiled and said, “God bless you!” I left him then, but that day was not the last day I thought about that old rambler, or my grandmother, who believed and practiced the commandment, *Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it.* (Hebrews 13:2). I don’t know whether the hobo was an angel or just a bum in the rain, but God saw it all and never forgot it. Nor for the better part of a century have I ever forgotten it. It was a genuine demonstration of compassion from one poor person to another. *As we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of faith* (Gal 6:10).

JD

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