

THE UNOPENED DOOR

By John F. Hall

We all travel down thousands and thousands of miles of winding roads before we reach Christ's door. Will we know when we have arrived? John Lennon and Paul McCartney wrote the song "The Long And Winding Road." These are some of their lyrics: "The long and winding road that leads to your door will never disappear. I've seen that road before. It always leads me here, lead me to your door. The wild and windy night that the rain has washed away. Has left a pool of tears, crying for the day. Why leave me standing here? Let me know the way. Many times I've been alone and many times I've cried. Anyway you'll never know the many ways I've tried. And still they lead me back to the long winding road. You left me standing here a long time ago. Don't leave me standing here, lead me to your door..."

In Luke, Chapter 13, Verse 24, are these words, "Strive to enter though the narrow door. For many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able." In 1851, William Holeman Hunt painted a picture representing Jesus Christ preparing to knock on an overgrown and long-unopened door. Recent representations show Jesus knocking on a door that has no door knob. The basis for the pictures can be found in Revelations, Chapter 3, Verse 20, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come to him, and sup with him and he with me." We all have a free will and the choice is ours to open that door.

The country singer, Willie Nelson was filling up his car with gas at the Flying J service station off Interstate 24 in Oak Grove, Kentucky, several years ago. I was coming out of the Flying J's restaurant as Willie Nelson was going in. Now, Willie Nelson looks as wild and unkempt in person as he does on TV. I greeted him and said, "Hi Willie! How's it going?" He just smiled and said, "Fine, son," as he walked into the restaurant. I guess he was heading back to Nashville, Tennessee. When I was in law enforcement, the last few years anyway, I would come on duty for the night shift from 10:00 PM to 6:00 AM. I would grab the radio mic and asked the dispatcher, who else was on duty with me. The lady dispatcher would reply, "Just you." This meant that I was responsible to patrol all eleven counties in Western Kentucky. It would not be unusual to have to fill up the police car's gas tank two times before the night was over. I kept my short barrel shotgun under my legs. I knew that I could not expect any back-up for at least 20 minutes if I needed it. I kept a personal 30 odd six high powered rifle in the trunk of the car. I was warned that if I pulled it out and used it, that I would be suspended for a week. At that time, Troopers were under gunned. My off duty weapon was a 9mm automatic. I enjoyed "working the road." But it's a young person's job.

When I was called to work some kind of security assignment in Frankfort, Kentucky or some kind of training at Eastern Kentucky University, I would sign Willie Nelson's song "On the Road Again." These are some of his lyrics: "On the road again, I just can't wait to get on the road again. The life I love is makin' music with my friends. And I can't wait to get on the road again. On the road again, going places that I've never been. Seein' things that I may never see again. And I can't wait to get on the road again. Here we go,

on the road again. Like a band of Gypsies we go down the highway. We're the best of friends. Insisting that the world keep turnin' our way. And our way is on the road again. And I can't wait to get on the road again. The life I love is makin' music with my friends. And I can't wait to get on the road again, break free. And I can't wait to get on the road again.”

When all is said and done, it would not surprise me that I drove several million miles on those winding roads. I met a lot of good people along the way. I am blessed to have young people in my life like Jade, Skyler and Lexie. It makes a real challenge for me to be able to write true stories that interest them. Not that I am unable to write fiction like Jesse Stuart, F. Scott Fitzgerald and Ernest Hemingway. It's just that fictitious stories are just that to me. They are made up and I would not be true to myself if I had to write them. It would also be the same for my friends Trish, Mike, Audrey, Dr. Butler and my Christian Fraternity Brothers in Hopkinsville. The challenge is to continue doing what I have been doing for the past 41 years and pray that I will not hit a dry period when the words stop flowing.

I know that at the end of my journey, on the winding roads that I have traveled, that I will stand at Christ's unopened door. By faith, my hope will be to see the merciful face of Jesus and hope that I will pass His test and that He will recommend and sponsor me before His Father. I shall give Him my soul that at times was battered, abused and broken. For He knows what I have done and what I have failed to do as I have traveled those broken roads that lead to His unopened door. In Colossians, Chapter 4, Verse 3 are these words: “At the same time, pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison.”

I wrote a companion story to this story titled, “Wisdom's Themes.” In this time of the pandemic, I record a few things that will be forgotten as time marches on. I ask Christ's blessings as we deal with these uncertain times. And I shall be glad when I can get on the road again to travel towards Christ's unopened door.

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