

## Ransom Notes

### Reminders From A Pill Box

Every day, I hop out of bed and head for the bathroom to take one tiny pill designed to keep me healthy. It must be inhaled/swallowed at least thirty minutes prior to enjoying my wake-up coffee.

On morning, as my sleepy eyes attempted to focus and my clumsy fingers were failing to attach to a tiny white health-helper, my head spoke to me. "This is so funny. Kathy, it seems like every time you attempt to sort the trio of night pills from the wake-up item, the three night ones eagerly pop-out on the counter, leaving just one pill in the container. I wonder why?"

A few mornings later, a similar exodus of pills occurred and once again my *Wonder-Button* turned on. A scripture phrase appeared on my mental computer screen - "**The First Shall Be Last and the Last Shall Be First.**" Although not a big deal, I do have crazy thoughts. Although to this day, I still have no idea why that little white pill likes to stay in the pillbox, I had Ransom Note ideas flooding my head.

Jesus, as recorded in Mark 10:17-31, had an encounter with a rich man one day. The fellow dashed up to the Lord, fell on his knees, and inquired what he needed to do to inherit eternal life. The Master did not tell him to take a little white pill each day. No, it was must more shocking than that. He first reminded the rich guy of several of the ten commandments, including don't murder, commit adultery, steal, give false testimony, or dishonor your parents.

Our man on his knees quickly responded, "No big deal. I have obeyed those commands since I was a kid." Jesus, never for a lack of words, surprised him with this additional command. "One thing you lack. Go, sell EVERYTHING, yes, everything. Then give it to the poor." Probably they did not have a Goodwill organization in the first century but I'm certain there were financially struggling individuals needing a gift.

Christ continued, "Then come, follow me." This was obviously not what news a rich person wanted to hear. Looking very sad, he left because, "He had great wealth" (Matthew 10:22).

Jesus, the Teacher, quickly gave the disciples additional information, and now the connection to my little white, stubborn pill. "Guys, it is hard to enter the Kingdom of God, especially for the rich. In fact, it is harder than getting a camel to kneel down and crawl through a very low gate often found in city walls during the first century and referred to as "going through the eye of a needle."

*Our Savior continues, "Truly I tell you, no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age: homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields – along with persecutions – and in the age to come eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last first."* (Matthew 10:29-31).

Wouldn't it be fun sometime when you're the person standing at the end of a very long line at a restaurant and suddenly the hostess walks up and motions you to follow her immediately, especially if you sensed they were just about to run out of your very favorite food, the one you had been mentally tasting for at least two weeks as you anticipated this special evening out? All guests waiting would eventually have food, but oh what joy to be at the head of the line, to be FIRST!

As I reread these remarks of the Lord, my mind drifted again to everyday life. When planning to attend a large event where you've paid the price but seats are not reserved, it is open seating. Even the last people buying tickets have an opportunity for the best seats in the house. The 'last' buyer can come early and choose to avoid the seat behind a pillar, under the strong blowing air conditioner, or on the top row of the bleachers. There are special joys of being first.

The scriptures do not say that ALL who are last will be first. It says MANY shall be first. I guess we just have to leave it up to God to decide when our turn to enter will be but He certainly implies that the RICHEST followers cannot necessarily BUY their way to the head of the line. Wealth is not the criteria for your new heavenly home. But He added another comment. This entry to our new home may necessitate leaving our family, our beloved little bungalow nestled in a pine forest, or even the job of our dreams. Being a follower may involve some deep sacrifices, including possible persecution.

For me to increase my chances of living a long, healthy life means daily swallowing the tiny pill(s). Entering the Kingdom eventually, whether at the front or the end of the line, means faithfully and eagerly sharing in the responsibilities of the Christian family, even if that may mean suffering or sacrifice.

**So get off your duff! Figure out your gifts and talents. Then . . . Daily find opportunities to use those gifts to spread God's love to people at all ends of the financial spectrum.**

