

The Room...

by: Joshua Harris

In that place between wakefulness and dreams, I found myself in the room. There were no distinguishing features except the one wall covered with small index card files. They were like the ones in libraries that list by authors or subject in alphabetical order. But these files, which stretched from floor to ceiling and seemingly endlessly in either direction, had very different headings.

As I drew near the wall of files, the first to catch my attention was one that read "Girls I Have Liked". I opened it and began flipping through the cards. I quickly shut it, shocked to realize that I recognized the names written on each one.

Without being told, I knew where I was. This lifeless room with its small files was a crude catalog system for my life. Here were all of the actions of every moment, big and small, in a detail my memory could not match. A sense of wonder and curiosity, coupled with horror, stirred within me as I began randomly opening files and exploring their content. Some brought joy and sweet memories; others a sense of shame and regret so intense that I would look over my shoulder to see if anyone was watching.

A file named "Friends" was next to one marked "Friends I Have Betrayed". The titles ranged from the mundane to the outright weird. "Books I Have Read", "Lies I Have Told", "Comfort I Have Given", "Jokes I Have Laughed At". Some were almost hilarious in their exactness: "Things I Have Yelled At My Brothers and Sisters". Others I couldn't laugh at: "Things I Have Done In My Anger", "Things I Have Muttered Under My Breath At My Parents". I never ceased to be surprised by the contents. Often there were many more cards than I expected. Sometimes fewer than I hoped.

I was overwhelmed by the sheer volume of the life I had lived. Could it be possible that I had time in the years of my life to write each of those thousands or even millions of cards? But each card confirmed this truth. Each was written in my own handwriting. Each

signed with my signature.

When I pulled out the file marked "Songs I Have Listened To", I realized the file grew long to contain its contents. The cards were packed so tightly, yet after two or three yards I had found the end of the file. I shut it, shamed, not so much by the quality of the music but the vast amount of time I knew that the file represented.

When I came to a file marked "Lustful Thoughts", I felt a chill run through my body. I pulled it out only an inch, not willing to test its size, and drew out a card. I shuddered at its content. I felt sick to think that such a moment had been recorded.

An almost animal rage broke over me. One thought dominated my mind: "No one must ever see these cards! No one must ever see this room! I have to destroy it!". In an insane frenzy I yanked the file out. Its size didn't matter now. I had to empty it and burn the cards. But as I took it at one end and began pounding it on the floor, I could not dislodge a single card. I became desperate and pulled out a card, only to find it as strong as steel when I tried to tear it. Defeated and utterly helpless, I returned the file to its slot, and then I saw it.

The title was "People I Have Shared The Gospel With". The handle was brighter than those around it, newer, almost unused. I pulled on its handle and a small box not more than three inches long fell into my hands. I could not count the cards it contained on one hand.

Tears came. I began to weep. Sobs so deep that the hurt started on my stomach and shook through me. I fell on my knees and cried. I cried out of shame, from the overwhelming shame of it all. The rows of file shelves swirled in my tear filled eyes. No one must ever, ever know of this room. I must lock it up and hide the key.

But then as I brushed away the tears, I saw Him. No, please, not Him. Not here. Oh, anyone but Jesus.

I watched his response, and in the moment I could bring myself to look upon his face, I saw a sorrow deeper than my own. He seemed to intuitively go to the worst boxes. Why did he have to read every one?

Finally he turned and looked at me from across the room. He looked at me with pity in his eyes. But this was pity that didn't anger me. I dropped my head, covered my face with my hands and began to cry again. He walked over and put his arms around me. He could have said so many things. But He didn't say a word. He just sat there and cried with me.

Then he got up and walked back to the wall of files. Starting at one end of the room He took out a file and one by one, began to sign his name over mine on each card.

"No!" I shouted rushing to Him. All I could find to say was "No, no" as I pulled the card from Him.

His name shouldn't be on these cards. But there it was, written in red so rich, so dark, so alive. The name Jesus covered mine. It was written with His blood.

He gently took the card back. He smiled a sad smile and began to sign the cards. I don't think I'll ever understand how he did it so quickly, but the next instant it seemed he was on the last file and walked back to my side. He placed His hand on my shoulder and said "IT IS FINISHED".

I stood up and He led me out of the room. There was no lock on its door. There were still cards to be written.

The price has been paid by Him. All He asks for is love. [*repentance & faith*]

Unforgiven sin: "For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known. Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops. **Luke 12:2-3**

Forgiven sin: "...so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us." **Ps.103:11-12**

"And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." **Hebrews 10:17**

"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." **Isaiah 1:18**



Baptists

We believe that the Baptists are the original Christians. We did not commence our existence at the Reformation, we were reformers before

Luther or Calvin were born; we never came from the Church of Rome, for we were never in it, but we have an unbroken line up to the Apostles themselves. We have always existed from the very days of Christ, and our principles, sometimes veiled and forgotten, like a river which may travel underground for a little

season, have always had honest and holy adherents. Persecuted alike by Romanists and Protestants of almost every sect, yet there has never existed a government holding Baptist principles which persecuted others; nor, I believe, any body of Baptists ever held it to be right to put the consciences of others under the control of man. We have ever been ready to suffer; as our martyrologies will prove, but we are not ready to accept any help from the State, to prostitute the purity of the Bride of Christ to any alliance with Government, and we will never make the Church, although the Queen, the despot over the consciences of men....C. H. Spurgeon

Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834-92) was England's best-known preacher for most of the second half of the nineteenth century. In 1854, just four years after his conversion, Spurgeon, then only 20, became pastor of London's famed New Park Street Church. The congregation quickly outgrew their building, moved to Exeter Hall, then to Surrey Music Hall. In these venues Spurgeon frequently preached to audiences numbering more than 10,000—all in the days before electronic amplification. In 1861 the congregation moved permanently to the newly constructed Metropolitan Tabernacle.

Spurgeon describes his conversion as follows: "Through the Lord's restraining grace, and the holy influence of my early home life, both at my father's and my grandfather's, I was kept from certain outward forms of sin in which others indulged; and, sometimes, when I began to take stock of myself, I really thought I was quite a respectable lad, and might have been half inclined to boast that I was not like other boys, untruthful, dishonest, disobedient, swearing, Sabbath breaking, and so on. But, all of a sudden, I met Moses, carrying in his hand the law of God; and as he looked at me, he seemed to search me through and through with his eyes of fire. He bade me read "the ten commandments" and as I read them, and remembered what I had been taught about their spiritual meaning as interpreted by the Lord Jesus Christ, they all seemed to join in accusing and condemning me in the sight of the thrice-holy Jehovah. Then, like Daniel, "my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength;" and I understood what Paul meant when he wrote, "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God."

For years he remained under deep conviction of sin until one Sunday morning in January 1850 a snow storm forced him to cut short his intended journey and turn in to a Primitive Methodist chapel in Colchester. "The minister did not come that morning; he was snowed up, I suppose. At last, a very thin looking man, a shoemaker, or tailor, or something of that sort, went up into the pulpit to preach. . . . He was obliged to stick to his text, for the simple reason that he had little else to say. The text was, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth."

When he had managed to spin out ten minutes or so, he was at the end of his tether. Then he looked at me under the gallery, and I daresay, with so few present, he knew me to be a stranger. Just fixing his eyes on me, as if he knew all my heart, he said, "Young man, you look very miserable." Well, I did, but I had not been accustomed to have remarks made from the pulpit on my personal appearance before. However, it was a good blow, struck right home. He continued, "and you always will be miserable—miserable in life, and miserable in death—if you don't obey my text; but if you obey now, this moment, you will be saved." Then, lifting up his hands, he shouted, as only a Primitive Methodist could do, "Young man, look to Jesus Christ. Look! Look! Look! You have nothin' to do but to look and live." I saw at once the way of salvation . . . I had been waiting to do fifty things, but when I heard that word, "Look!" What a charming word it seemed to me! Oh! I looked until I could almost have looked my eyes away. There and then the cloud was gone, the darkness had rolled away, and that moment I saw the sun; and I could have risen that instant, and sung with the most enthusiastic of them, of the precious blood of Christ, and the simple faith which looks alone to HIM . . .