



"Strengthening The Saved & Saving The Lost"

The Preacher Man

June 16th, 2012



Arriving at the nursing home just a few minutes earlier than the scheduled 3:00 service, he parks his fuel-efficient hatchback in the visitor parking. He unloads his tools again - his bag containing a small laptop computer, sermon notes and a leather bound Bible, and his portable sound system, a karaoke-meets-suitcase

tow with the other, is his second such trek of the day. He began with a service this morning over 100 miles away at another small town Oklahoma nursing home.

Inside, the facility's activities director is already rounding up the congregation. Some have already taken their place on an available lounge chair, while others remain seated in their wheelchairs they've scooted from their rooms just down the hall. Still others are awaiting assistance from a caretaker to push their bed into this common area so that they can attend church this afternoon.

At the end of the hallway in room 610B, an 88 year old widow is putting the finishing touches on her makeup as she's greeted by her grandson who came to visit her today. Filled with excitement and anticipation, donning her nicest jewelry and a beautiful dress, and grasping her own copy of the "hymnal" - photocopies of the choice selection of hymns they sing - the widow makes her way toward the service, her wheelchair pushed today by her special guest.

By now, the preacher has the pulpit set up. From this small table, he picks up his microphone and greets the attendees with a smile of the rarest kind. He eases any concern about his sophisticated looking technology with a joke. "My wife travels with me each day," he says,

"and the hardest part is getting her into that box!" The preacher's wife, in fact, is the pianist playing each recorded track available on his laptop.

He directs each one to flip their stapled hymnal to page 9, taps the keyboard on the computer, and begins to lead a traditional rendition of "Victory in Jesus" over the piano in the background. Several songs are sung, each in a musical key and at a pace just right for the audience to sing along. Heads that previously stared empty at the ground instantly lift up and even begin to sing. The widow pauses singing briefly but just long enough to express her gratitude to the gentleman sitting next to her; with tears of joy, she expresses "it's such a blessing to have my grandson in church with me today."

Several minutes and songs later, the preacher opens his Bible and begins to read a few short passages of scripture. Each verse is supplemented with a relatable story, encouraging participation from the pews. The preacher seems to have an uncanny way of interacting with each listener, smoothly transitioning along the line of wheelchairs with his wireless mic to preach at a face to face distance.



His message ends with 2 Corinthians 5:21, a story about two brothers as a parable about how Jesus took the punishment we deserved, and an altar call for salvation or opportunity to refresh and ensure right standing with God.

Before leaving, the preacher greets each member of the congregation, which by the end had grown to fill up the entire commons. Several ask for specific prayer before heading back to their dinner table, their room, or their offices. The grandson doesn't leave before receiving a personal blessing and prayer from his grandmother.

The preacher is Paul DeNeui, and his is the only full time nursing home ministry of its kind that I know of. It was awesome getting to sit next to my Grandma and attend one of his services this week. If you'd like to support one of the best causes that I know of, bringing church to those who can't physically attend a church, go to his web site. www.pauldeneui.org

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