



MR. WINKLE GOES TO WAR

By THEODORE PRATT



W.N.U. RELEASE

THE STORY THUS FAR: Forty-four-year-old Wilbert Winkle, who operates the Fixit repair shop, is notified by his draft board that he is in I-A. He breaks the bad news to his domineering wife, Amy, who suddenly becomes very tender. Mr. Winkle is sent to Camp Squibb, where he graduates from Motor Mechanics school, and then goes home on a furlough. After the furlough Mr. Winkle finds himself, with his friend, Mr. Tinker, in a big convoy. They land on the island of Talizo, where they meet several old pals. One day the Japs come. Mr. Winkle dives under a command car while Mr. Tinker shoots it out with a plane. Mr. Tinker is hit, Mr. Winkle grabs a machine gun and mows down the Japs.

CHAPTER XIII

As he aimed, the officer was passing Mr. Tinker. To Mr. Winkle's amazement, one of Mr. Tinker's legs moved out and tripped the man, sending him sprawling. Mr. Tinker's jump at him was more of a crawl, but he made it before the Jap could fire his pistol.

The hairy hands of Mr. Tinker found the officer's throat. They held on while the two rolled on the ground. Gradually the Jap's convulsive movements stopped and he lay still. Mr. Tinker continued to retain his grasp on the other's throat, viselike, even when, in turn, there was no more movement from him.

Mr. Winkle turned back to his main business.

He felt no shock when he saw more assault boats coming out of the mist in addition to the two now beaching themselves. He had only the determined desire to kill and kill again even when he knew he must be overpowered.

He didn't hear, above the noise of his gun, the trucks grinding to a stop in back of him with a shriek of brakes. For some time he wasn't aware that other men, live men,



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were in the fox hole with him and that still more were firing from the sand for some distance on either side.

He didn't know when he left the fox hole and with the others ran upon the beach with a rifle in his hands. He was astounded, once, to note the bayonet on the end of the rifle, and that he had plunged it into a Jap soldier and was having difficulty in getting it out. Twist, he thought, that was it. He twisted, and the blade came free. It was true what they said.

He felt a sharp sting in his left shoulder.

On top of his head there was a blinding clang.

His helmet was knocked off.

Something crashed on his bare head and after that he was aware of nothing.

Mr. Winkle opened his eyes cautiously. He had been conscious for a few minutes, but he couldn't place where he was.

The first thing he saw was the face of Jack Pettigrew. Jack had only a head, which floated in the air all by itself. The mouth in the head said, "Hello, Pop."

"So you made it, too," observed Mr. Winkle.

"Made it?" Jack's head inquired.

"We're dead, aren't we?" asked Mr. Winkle. "You were dead the last time I saw you. This is Heaven, I suppose. Or is it—?" In some panic he demanded, "Which one?" The head laughed. "We're in an Army hospital just outside of Los Angeles."

The rest of Jack came into focus. Clad in pajamas and a bathrobe, he was sitting on the edge of a white bed. There were lines of white beds.

"I don't understand," Mr. Winkle said. "We're supposed to be on Talizo. You—and the Japs . . ."

"The Japs," Jack grinned, "didn't get anywhere. We've taken the whole island since then. You saved it. You're a hero. You're going to get a medal. The President told about you in one of his speeches."

"And look at these papers," Jack runnaged in a locker between the beds and then held the front pages

of newspapers so Mr. Winkle could read them. One of them was The Evening Standard. Mr. Winkle took it and saw big black letters which said:

WINKLE, HERO OF TALIZO

"I'm supposed to call the nurse if you wake up," Jack said. "You've been out for five weeks. You're not supposed to talk."

"You do the talking," Mr. Winkle ordered. "And lots of it."

"You don't have to worry," Jack said. "Mrs. Winkle knows. I went home to see my folks. I'm here now only for a check-up before I join my new company. We're headed for the Philippines this time."

"You left out something," Mr. Winkle said. "The most important part. The Alphabet, Freddie, and the others . . ."

In a low voice, Jack said, "I was the only one."

It was a moment before he could ask about Mr. Tinker. Then he spoke only his name.

"No," Jack told him.

At least, thought Mr. Winkle, Mr. Tinker had got his Jap himself. He would always cherish thinking of the sight of Mr. Tinker with his hands around the Japanese officer's throat.

"That's why I want to go back," Jack said.

"I'm going, too," Mr. Winkle told him.

Mr. Winkle enjoyed, instead of shying from, every moment of his reception when he arrived in Springfield. He beamed at the huge crowd waiting at the station. With satisfaction, he saw and heard the American Legion band which had turned out for him alone this time. He read the banners and posters people carried. He admired the decorations, one of which read unashamedly: "Our Hero."

There was Amy embracing him and murmuring brokenly, "Wilbert . . . Wilbert . . ."

"Look," he said. Right there before all the people he lifted his arm to shoulder height, telling Amy, "That's as far as it will go."

Amy stared at him, embarrassed and stricken. The crowd hushed.

"It's good enough for holding you," Mr. Winkle told his wife, putting his arm around her.

The crowd roared its approval, while Amy, blushing, whispered to him, "Wilbert, you're changed more than ever."

The Mayor stepped up and gave him the keys to the city, in the form of a large wooden key painted gold and festooned with gay ribbons.

Then came the most important part of the ceremony, the part that made Mr. Winkle most appreciative and brought a lump to his throat.

His own commanding officer being some distance away, it had been arranged for the Colonel who commanded the camp where Mr. Winkle was inducted into the Army to present him with the Distinguished Service Cross.

The Colonel read the citation from a scroll. . . . awarded to Wilbert George Winkle . . . distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an armed enemy . . . beyond and above his duty . . .

The Colonel pinned the medal on his tunic, stepped back and saluted him. Mr. Winkle was so surprised at being saluted first by an officer, and especially one of such rank as a Colonel, that he forgot to salute back. Instead, he found himself shaking hands with the Colonel.

In the Mayor's car, with the Mayor in front and Mr. Winkle and a

weepy Amy alone in the back seat, they paraded through the town to the blaring accompaniment of the band and cheering people who threw a great many bits of paper from the buildings. Mr. Winkle waved and waved his good arm, and it was borne in upon him that it was most men's dream come true, notably because this time no one called out derisively.

Finally they were deposited in front of their house, where a number of people were gathered. Among them was Mr. Wescott, who had evidently come out to see for himself. And having seen, he didn't find any reason to laugh now. He couldn't say anything at all when he opened his mouth in that endeavor, but simply stood there with his lips parted, gaping.

Mr. Winkle greeted him warmly and shook hands before going on with Amy up their walk.

Mr. Onward, the reportographer, whom Mr. Winkle had seen at the station taking pictures, followed them up the walk. "Listen," Mr. Onward asked rather humbly, "how about an interview?"

"No," said Mr. Winkle, "no interview."

"But—" Mr. Onward began to plead.

"Use the same one you printed before," Mr. Winkle suggested.

"That was a good one."

Alone together in their house, Mrs. Winkle dabbed at her eyes with her

handkerchief, touched his medal with one finger, dabbed some more, and asked, "Whoever would have thought—?"

"Not me," said Mr. Winkle.

"Not I," she corrected. She spoke a little sharply, as if trying to hide her emotions or expressing a desire to bring him down a peg in case his popularity might have gone to his head.

In trying to determine which it was, Mr. Winkle saw the answer to his speculation on whether or not Amy would continue in her new regard for him, or revert to the old. He found a number of things to support his belief that war had changed her as permanently as it had him.

She would not find it comfortable to henpeck a national hero.

[THE END]



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IMPROVED UNIFORM INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

BY HAROLD L. LUNDQUIST, D. D. Of The Moody Bible Institute of Chicago. Released by Western Newspaper Union.

Lesson for January 28

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LOYALTY TO THE KINGDOM

LESSON TEXT—Matthew 6:33; 7:12, 16-29. GOLDEN TEXT—Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.—Matthew 6:33.

In the kingdom of Christ there must be unquestioned loyalty. If then He is the King of our lives, we as Christian men and women will want to live in accordance with His blessed will.

Loyalty to Christ leads to the best kind of living. It surpasses any experience of loyalty to a cause or a human personality. Instead of hindering or limiting our development, it opens wide the grand vistas of a life altogether worth-while. It is a life:

I. Well Ordered (6:33).

Much of the distress in which men and women find themselves is caused by the fact that their lives are not well ordered. They live in a constant flurry of uncertainty, indecision and disorder. They have no proper center for their lives, and consequently they are lopsided and lacking in real usefulness.

See how delightfully right is the experience and activity of a follower of Christ. He is the center. The interests of His kingdom are the first in thought. His righteousness is the rule of life. Other things? Well, all that is necessary, God adds day by day.

When the center of life is right, everything else is right—when that is wrong, all is wrong. Is your life centered in Christ?

II. Kind (7:12).

Spiritual principles apply to daily living, to our attitude toward our fellow men. Here we have the so-called Golden Rule. It is not the way of salvation; it is a summary of the teaching of the law and prophets. But it does provide us with a splendid principle of daily conduct.

Our active concern each day and in every touch with others is to be, "How would I like them to deal with me? Let me do thus to them." That is a higher standard than you think until you really try it. Only Christ can enable you to do it.

III. Fruitful (7:16-20).

Two fruit trees or vines may look almost alike until the fruit appears, and then we learn the true character of each—whether good or bad.

Every life brings forth some kind of fruit, and in its outward manifestation the life speaks of the inward condition of the life. Unclean and profane speech, hatred, dishonesty and trickery—these come out of an evil heart. Righteousness, pure and kindly speech, thoughtful actions, honest and straightforward dealings—these speak of the good heart.

The one whose life is centered in Christ (see above) is a vine after God's own planting. His roots strike deep down into the grace and mercy of God, and his fruit is the Christlike grace of Christian character (see Gal. 5:22, 23).

IV. Genuine (7:21-23).

Lip service will not do (v. 21). Even an imitation of the real service of God's people, but rendered without the backing of a life of faith, will result only in disappointment and our Lord's own disavowal (vv. 22, 23).

The opposite of that is equally true. The real child of God works for Christ; he speaks of his Lord, and calls on His name. But in and through it all there is the evident ring of sincerity and genuineness which marks it as the real thing.

One does not hear much mention these days of hypocrites in the church. Perhaps we are too polite to speak of them, or it may be that we think them too obvious to need pointing out. But they are there, going through the motions of a Christian life, talking the language, and imitating the works, but completely dead spiritually.

V. Well Grounded (7:24-29).

The figure of speech changes. Instead of being likened to fruit trees, men's lives are said to be like houses, with their various kinds of foundations and superstructures.

The figure is an interesting and instructive one. There is only one foundation upon which one can build a Christian life. "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (I Cor. 3:11).

Therein lies the folly of the modernist or liberal. He has denied and rejected the only foundation—and yet tries to build a house of Christian character. When the real problems of life strike, he goes down in ruin.

On the other hand, let no Christian who has laid a foundation on the rock fail to go on and build upon it. Thus grounded, his house of faith will stand though the wind and rain and floods of life seek to tear it down. Of that kind of house we read that "it fell not; for it was founded upon a rock" (v. 25).

This lesson will afford many professed Christians a chance to test their lives and their loyalties by God's standards.

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