

God's love is our ball of gold

There is an old Armenian folk tale that I enjoy. It is the story of two couples who happened to live next door to one another. One of these couples was rich and they lived in a large home with many amenities to enjoy. The other couple was poor and their home was quite modest.

Now the poor couple had a child and they were very happy; in fact, sounds of laughter were frequently heard coming from their small house. The rich couple, on the other hand, never seemed to be happy. And even though they had a larger house and many physical comforts, laughter was a rare visi-

tor in their home.

One day the rich woman met her poor neighbor outside and said to her: "You are poor. Why is it that your home is the center of joy and ours is not? Nearly every night we can hear the sound of laughter spilling into the neighborhood from your house." With a twinkle in her eye, the poor woman replied, "I guess it's our ball of gold. We constantly toss it back and forth. It gives us so much happiness."

Equipped with this new bit of information, the rich woman went back home and said to her husband: "The people next door, who

are always laughing, have a ball of gold that they toss back and forth." "Please, honey," she continued, "can't we get a ball of gold for our house?"

The next day the rich husband placed a call and ordered a sizable amount of gold to be fashioned into a ball. When he received his new gold ball, he tried to toss it to his wife, but it was so heavy that it crashed to the floor: Instead of

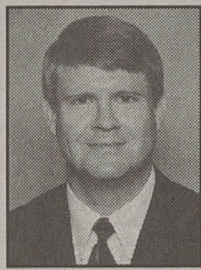
happiness, once again this rich couple was filled with sorrow.

The next morning, the rich woman visited with her poor neighbor. "You must tell me more about your ball of gold," she said. "My husband had one made for us, but it was so heavy that we couldn't toss it and it nearly ruined our house." The poor woman was deeply apologetic. "I'm so sorry," she said, "but when I told you about a ball of gold I was referring to our wonderful child. We literally toss him back and forth, and he squeals with laughter. To us he is as precious as a ball of gold and the love we share with him fills

our house with joy."

I don't have a ball of gold at my house, but I do have a wonderful wife and three sons. In addition, I enjoy the friendship of many Christian sisters and brothers all across the country. In this sense, at least, I am a rich person. It is sometimes a difficult truth for us to appreciate, but the reality is that our wealth does not come from the things we own, but from the God we serve and the people we love. These are our balls of gold.

Dr. Jeff Hensley is pastor of Kings Mountain Baptist Church.



Jeff Hensley
Meditation

CHURCH BRIEFS

Grace United Methodist Church, 829 Cleveland Avenue, Kings Mountain, will hold a country style buffet breakfast July 16 from 6:30 to 10 a.m. Proceeds benefit Relay for Life. The cost is a \$4 donation for adults and \$2 for children ages 7-12. For more information, call 704-739-6000.

Cherokee Street Baptist Church, 423 Cherokee Street, Kings Mountain, will host The Bradys in concert Sunday, July 17 at 6 p.m. For more information call 739-7697 or 734-1420.

Spencer Mountain Road Volunteer Fire Department will host its annual Spencer Mountain Outdoors Gospel Songfest Saturday, July 23 at 7 p.m. at Spencer Mountain ball park. Admission and parking are free. Concessions are available. Take a lawn chair or blanket. Featured performers include The Songsters, the Chapel Grove Quartet, and gospel pianist Rex Smith. For more information, call 704-864-9185.

St. Peter Baptist Church, Grover, will hold revival Sunday through Tuesday at 7 p.m. Rev. Kimberly Moore of Greenville, SC will be the speaker. For more information call 704-937-9136.

Crowders Mountain Baptist Church, 125 Mayberry Lane, Kings Mountain, will host The Bluegrass Revival in concert Saturday, July 16 at 6 p.m. For more information call Rev. Larry Laws at 1-864-839-4820 or Music Director Ponda Thacker at 704-739-5553. Directions to church: From Kings Mountain, take 29-74 and turn right onto Sparrow Springs Rd. Go 1.3 miles, turn right on Mayberry Lane at church sign.

Shelby Seventh-Day Adventist Church, 2350 Hoey Church Rd., Shelby, is hosting a Bible prophecy study class every Saturday morning from 9:30-10:30. The public is invited. For more information call 704-482-9188.

What makes you scream?

I have heard that behind every successful man is his wife shaking her head in disbelief. I don't know if this statement has been scientifically

proven, but it probably has a certain amount of merit. I know that for over 21 years, my wife has not only stood behind me, she has always stood at my side when I need her help, which is often. Recently, I needed her help to rob some of our honey bees. I can rob them by myself, but I take a bigger risk than most bee keepers.

You see, when I was a child I had to be taken to the hospital on two different occasions because of bee stings. My throat began to swell shut as I was slowly suffocating from lack of oxygen. That is one childhood memory that I would like to forget, but it is always in the back of my mind when I am checking on my bees. I have been stung many times since my childhood and have not had any serious reaction, but I realize it could happen at any time, so I like to take someone with me if I can't drive myself to a hospital, or funeral home, whichever is closer!

I bought my wife her own bee suit, to protect her from bee stings when the

time comes to rob the bees. She didn't even act nervous when I took off the top of the first super and the bees starting filing out to welcome us to their home. She was holding the smoker, which is a device used to blow smoke into the bee hive to calm the bees down and make them fly away. I was wondering what she would do if by chance she got stung while standing at my side. I could see her throwing down the smoker and running for her life if she panicked from being around all those angry bees. The reason I thought of this scenario is because I had thought about doing that very same thing many times when the bees would cover my body looking for a place to sting. However, she never said a word as we worked together to check on our five different hives. It was a good day because neither of us got stung and we did get some beautiful honey. As a reward for faithful work, I took my wife to a restaurant for a drink (glass of tea), and even a hot dog. Never let it be said that I can't repay a debt!

As we were driving to the restaurant, my wife, who had been unusually quiet, began to scream. I stopped the truck in the middle of the road and asked her what was wrong. All she would say was, "A tick, there is a tick crawling on my bee suit!" Sure enough, a small tick was walking

around on her leg, looking for a place to take a bite. The tick didn't have any more luck biting my wife than the bees had in stinging her a few moments earlier. I removed the tick from her suit and she calmed right down, it was as if I had used the smoker on her.

I asked her how come she could be around thousands of bees that wanted to sting her and she never acted scared, but a tick sent her into a tizzy. She then explained that a bee can give you honey, but all a tick can give you is a number of sickness. I am always impressed by someone who can give an intelligent answer under stress!

What are you afraid of today? Is it a bee sting? A tick bite? Sickness? Financial loss? Family problems? I realize that we all face things in our lives that make a chill go down our spines, but do we ever worry over things that we can't control? Luke 12: 7 tells us, "Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear..." When we trust in Christ as our Lord, we can rest assured that He is in control of our lives. If He has taken the time to number the hairs on your head, then you know that He has the other areas of your life under control! Remember, don't give in to sin. Think about it!

Vince Hefner is pastor of First Baptist Church, Cherryville.



Vince Hefner
Meditation



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