

MY STRONG TOWER

by Mary Ann Cassidy

“The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous run into it and are safe.” Proverbs 18:10 KJV

I will never forget that day. It was in November, 1981. My youngest daughter and I were in Amsterdam’s Schipol Airport, making our way back to the US from Ghana, W. Africa- just the two of us. She was three years old, and I didn’t dare let her out of my sight. Her Down’s syndrome condition had negatively affected her in many ways, but not in her ability to run like a deer. More than once I had nearly lost her at the Mall, and I certainly did not want to lose her in that huge, sprawling “city” called an airport.

It would be several hours before our plane departed, but I wanted to get us through Passport Control as soon as possible. Until this trip, I had never traveled internationally without my husband, and he had always taken care of presenting our documents to the immigration officers. Suddenly, I wasn’t quite sure of what documents I should present at the booth, so I found an immigration officer who was standing off to the side, and asked him for help. He told me I only needed our boarding passes. So, while tightly holding onto my daughter’s little hand (for fear she would get away from me if I let go of her), I then arranged both our boarding passes in my other hand and joined those waiting in line.

Soon it was my turn, and I presented our boarding passes. The immigration officer sternly looked at me and gruffly said, “Where are your passports?” In that moment, panic struck me, for while I should have realized I had to present them as well, I had trusted what the other officer had told me. As I began quickly to reach into my bag for our passports, the man standing behind me (who was apparently in a tremendous hurry) stepped up alongside me and presented his papers to the officer. The officer took them, examined them, stamped them, and then collected everything on the top of his desk – as he had been taught to do – and gave all of it to that man. When the officer returned his attention to me, I gave him our passports. As he looked down to process our paperwork, he tersely snipped, “Where are your boarding passes?” Where were they? I had just given them to him. Surely, they could not have just disappeared. Or, perhaps they had. The next moments were filled with panic, fear and a bit of pandemonium. Soon, I was whisked away to an interrogation room. For the next several hours, I was questioned by five different groups of airport personnel in an effort to see if my version of what had happened would remain constant, or if my story would change.

By this time, I was weary. I was told my case would be discussed, and if they determined that I was found to be at fault, I would have to purchase two more tickets for the remainder of my trip. My heart sank to my toes. There was no way I would be able to purchase two more tickets. I only had \$96.00 in my wallet, no credit card, and no way to call anyone for help.

By then we needed to eat, so I headed for the restaurant. On the way, I passed by the immigration officer from the booth. He glared at me and sharply told me I was in very serious trouble. I was to learn

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later, that it is a very common thing for people to try to sneak onto planes without actually purchasing a ticket, and I was being considered as one of those.

As I placed a tray on the serving line of that restaurant, the Holy Spirit whispered to my spirit, “The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous run to it and are safe”. My mouth did not move to speak, but my spirit cried out, “Lord, I run into your name. Save me.” Peace immediately flooded my soul. I couldn’t eat, but I fed my daughter, and we returned to the main floor of the airport.

Again, I crossed paths with that same immigration officer. This time, he was almost trembling, his face was ashen with fear, and he did not speak.

Shortly before it was time for our flight to depart, I was again summoned to the interrogation room. I had been found not guilty of any wrong doing. Rather, they had determined that the immigration officer had abandoned protocol for handling documents when he accepted those from the man behind me. In so doing, he wrongly collected our boarding passes together with that man’s paperwork. I was given two new boarding passes and we were allowed to board the plane.

I learned two very important lessons that day. One: It was not I who “remembered” that verse of Scripture. I cannot tell you that I even consciously knew that verse of Scripture. But the Holy Spirit did, and he “brought” it to my mind when I needed it the most. Two: We really can run into the name of the Lord and be saved, for He surely saved me that day.

The Lord will do these things for you, as well, if you put your trust in Him and follow Him.