Sleepless Night


“The Count didn't like his king, Frederick William III of Prussia. In fact he loathed him, despised him, and wished he were dead. His feelings of hatred grew, until finally the Count made a plan to do away with King Frederick. His plot was a clever one. Nonetheless, it was discovered. To his chagrin, the Count found himself cast, for life, into prison at the fortress of Glatz.

The fortress was strong and secure, and the Count had no hope of escape. To make matters worse, this godless infidel was placed in solitary confinement and given nothing to read but a Bible. The Count was not interested in such a Book. For long months the man sat miserably in his cell, ignoring the treasure within his grasp.

Finally, one day, in utter boredom, he picked up the Book and began to read. He only did so, of course, to help pass the long, bitter hours of confinement. The Count neither wanted nor expected the Book to make a difference in his life. And indeed, it seemed that he experienced no change.

One rough, stormy November night, mountain gales howled around the fortress and rain fell in torrents. The Count lay sleepless on his cot, a tempest raging within his heart. His whole life seemed to rise up before him, and he saw himself as a terrible, hopeless sinner.

‘I have tried to live without God, and what has it brought me?’ he cried. ‘Nothing but despair and misery.’ Tears of futility wet his cheeks. How could God ever forgive such a sinner?

Desperate, he reached for the Bible. Opening it, his eyes fell on Psalm 50:15—‘Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me.’ Surely it was a message straight from God!!!

The Count fell on his knees for the first time since he was a child. ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’ he cried. Suddenly his physical imprisonment no longer seems to matter, for he had found rest for his soul.

That same night, in his castle in Berlin, King Frederick William III lay sleepless in bed. He was tormented with a painful illness. That night, the pain was unusually severe. In total exhaustion, the king begged God to grant him a single hour of refreshing sleep. Almost immediately, he fell into a deep satisfying sleep. When he awoke, he felt almost like a new man.

‘God has looked upon me very graciously!’ He exclaimed to his wife. ‘I want to show my thanks to Him. Who in my kingdom has wronged me the most? I will forgive him.’

The queen thought for a moment. ‘It would have to be the Count who is imprisoned in Glatz.’

‘He's the one!’ agreed the king. ‘I will pardon him today!’

Before dawn a messenger was on his way to Glatz. He bore a message of pardon and release to a man who had already found freedom in the Word of God.