

Talk It Over

Questions are prepared each week and are designed to prompt insights, questions, and the life experience of each listener. If these are used immediately following the sermon, it would be much the same as what was done in Israel at the time of the early church.

The Ancient Train

Read:

The Ancient Train

By William Barton

It came to pass that I was upon a journey, and I lodged in a certain City and I arose early in the morning to go forward upon my journey. And the Train came in on time, and I got on board. And it was not the kind of Train which I expected. For the Train that was advertised was an Express Train with Pullman Cars and other Expensive Luxuries. And this Train had no such things. For there was only an Engine, and a Baggage Car and one Coach. And the Coach was a Very Old One.

And the Passengers began to make Remarks. And one said, that this Coach had descended from Mount Ararat, and that there had been no Improvements made upon it since Noah used it as an Ark. And many such like things did they say.

But I spake unto myself, saying, There is a Reason, and if we be Patient, we shall discover it.

And the Conductor came through. And he wore no Uniform; but had a Badge in an Elastic Band, fastened around a Derby Hat. And I had not seen the like in many years.

And the passengers made Remarks to him about the kind of Train on which we were riding.

And he answered not a word until he had taken up all his Tickets. Then he stood in the Aisle and delivered an Oration. And he said:

I have listened to the Fool Remarks of you who think you are Wise concerning the quality of this Train. Be it understood by all of you that this is not the Regular Train, neither am I the Conductor of that Train. But I got out of bed at Four A.M. to run this Flivver from the Junction to the Terminal as an accommodation to you who have not sense enough to suspect that somebody is trying to do you a Favor. For it was known to us that about Twenty passengers were arriving at the Junction, and others to be picked up here, and we wanted to help you out. And because our regular crews are overworked, and many of our men are sick with the Flu, it was no easy job to get an Engineer and a Switch Engine and a couple of old Cars. And because there was no Conductor available, therefore



did the Division Manager undertake to see this Train to its Destination, and that's me. I was able to get away and take this Train because I have to go to the Terminal this morning; and I was minded to take the Switch Engine and go, but I made up this Train for your sakes. And now, if any of you want the Limited, and are discontented with this Train, behold, I will stop this old boat, and let you out, and ye can walk back or wait for it just as you prefer. For the Limited is in the Ditch about Fifty Miles back, and the track behind us will be blocked until Noon.

And no one decided to get off and walk, neither did any complain more of our Train.

And I considered this thing, and I said that if we were to stop and think before complaining, we should sometimes discover that the things whereof we complain are those for which we should be Thankful.

Discuss:

1. What are your general impressions of this story?
2. In what ways does the conductor seem to symbolize Jesus?
3. Read Proverbs 17:27-28. Without using names, share as a group your experience with someone who seems to be wise and thoughtful versus a reactor or foolish person.
4. Who do you most identify with in this parable and who would you like to be more like?

Wrap Up:

Share any final thoughts and close in prayer.