Subject: THE LOVEGREEN STORY
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THE LOVEGREEN STORY

A C Valdez Sr., in his book Fire On Azusa Street, wrote

In those daysâ€”like todayâ€”skeptics loudly insisted that â€œthe age of miracles is past.â€•

I could only answer, â€œIt is past all rightâ€”past, present, and futureâ€”just as Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever.â€• So many miracles of all varieties happenedâ€”cures of â€œincurables,â€• reversal of sin-filled lives, and strange, supernatural events that couldnâ€™t have occurred by coincidence.

I shall never forget the astounding series of major and minor miracles that occurred to a Mr. Lovegreen, a hotel owner in San Bernardino and Riverside counties of California.

Thirty years before, he had been a New York-based salesman who, with his wife, had traveled many times from city to city across country.

One day he told her, â€œIâ€™m going west again.â€•

She sighed, â€œDear, Iâ€™m tired of traveling. Weâ€™ve done it so much. I just canâ€™t take it any longer.â€•

That was not the response Lovegreen had expected, and he be-came upset and then stubborn.

â€œAll right, if thatâ€™s the way you feel, stay,â€• he replied. â€œBut Iâ€™m going anyway?â€™

Just like that, he walked out of her life and headed for Califor-nia. Now, during that thirty years, he became an alcoholic, deathly ill and seemingly hopeless. One night he fell up against our San Bernardino mission door, which flung open. And there, lying on the floor, reeking of whiskey, was this large, once fine-looking man, hemorrhaging from his stomach.

When I reached him, he glanced up, hopelessness in his blood-shot, blue eyes. As more blood oozed from his mouth, he gasped.

What pity I felt for him!

â€œO, parson. Do something for me!â€•

Now the hemorrhaging stopped; he coughed, soon caught his breath and explained himself.

â€œBefore my mother died, she prayed for me. While she was dying, she took me by the hand, looked into my eyes and said, â€œSon, I had hoped that, by this time, you would have given your heart to Jesus. Your mother would then have had the joy of seeing you a born again Christian. It seems I wonâ€™t have that pleasure. But, son, before I go, do me a favor. Put forth the effort to be a Christian and meet me in heaven. Iâ€™ll be watching for you through the eastern gate?â€•

â€œI said, â€˜Yes, mother.â€™ Parson, what else could I say? But I con-fess to you, I havenâ€™t triedâ€•

The creases in the forehead of his ruddy face deepened in grave concern.

â€œA few hours ago, I came away from the doctorâ€™s office. The lining of my stomach is goneâ€”eaten out with alcohol. The doc-tor advised me; â€˜Lovegreen, thereâ€™s nothing I can do for you now. Take my advice. Go right on drinking, because you wonâ€™t live long anyway. And if youâ€™re drunk, you wonâ€™t know the difference.â€™ â€•

Lovegreenâ€™s watery eyes begged me as much as his voice.

â€œParson, canâ€™t you do something for me?â€•

â€œYes, if youâ€™ll promise to do something for me.â€•

â€œWhatâ€™s that?â€•

Again he gasped for air, and blood oozed from his mouth.

â€œCome into the mission. Promise that you wonâ€™t leave until we pray through to God. Then youâ€™ll have complete deliverance from alcohol, and I also promise that Jesus will heal your body and make you whole.â€•

As the path eased for an instant, he looked up at me with a flicker of hope.

â€œThatâ€™s the least I can do.â€•

I have dealt with many alcoholics, and their promises are often worthless. So I was still skeptical. Lovegreen slowly, painfully rose to his feet and followed me to the altar. In this mission, we had home-made, awkward-looking, heavy benches eighteen feet long. They served me well that night, because my wife, mother and I piled many of these benches against the back door.

Then we fell upon our knees and prayed. The spiritual battle was on. I donâ€™t know how many times Lovegreen collapsed on the floor, but the devil spoke to me in no uncertain terms.

â€œValdez, if you keep this man locked up in here, and he dies. you will be held for manslaughter?â€•

That sent fear racing through me. Unfortunately, what he had said was true. And I felt a terrible temptation to yield. But it wasnâ€™t the voice of God. God doesnâ€™t speak that way. The Lord says, â€œCome unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.â€• So I turned and saidâ€” â€œSatan, get behind me in the Name of Jesus,â€• and the Spirit of the Lord rebuked the devil.

That was just the beginning of the story It was a night of strug-gle, and Lovegreen started screaming in an unearthly way. â€œGet those snakes off me!â€• he begged. He was having terrifying nightmares of delirium tremens. He thrashed and worked his hands to untangle snakes winding around his neck. â€œO, my God,â€• he cried, â€œThose witches and demons!â€•

We continued to pray with faith, through the night and into the early morning. At six oâ€™clock, we were hoarse and exhausted but still holding on to God in his behalf.

By this time, he was beginning to flail his arms and crying out:

â€œLet me go! Open the door! Let me go!â€•

But I spoke sharply to him.

â€œYou promised to stay until deliverance comes?â€•

A few minutes later, when my mother, wife and I were praying, the glory of God came down like a skyfull of light, filling the room. All of us looked up at the same time. A bright shaft of light fo-cused on Lovegreenâ€™s face, and he shouted, â€œIâ€™m saved, Iâ€™m saved, Iâ€™m saved.â€•

Not only was he gloriously born of the Spirit of God, he was also healed in body. His stomach was so well he was able to eat a large beef steak. He no longer wanted alcohol.

An urge to be with his wife had gnawed at him off and on for thirty years and was part of the reason for his alcoholism. They had been divorced and, in a generation, had not communicated with one another. Like him, she had never remarried.

On one morning, she felt a powerful desire to travel to Los An-geles. She didnâ€™t know why. Although a Christian, she did not realize that God was leading her. Her train stopped at San Bernardino, and a strange urge made her take a layover in that city

The railroad station was then at least three quarters of a mile from the heart of town, so she drifted down on the left hand side of the street, looking for a hotel.

At that very instant, Lovegreen felt a strong desire to go for a walk, and he started down the same side of the street.

The woman coming toward him looked familiar. He blinked his clear blue eyes. The woman saw him and squinted to make sure. The man coming toward her looked so familiar.

Suddenly they were face to face for the first lime in thirty years.

Lovegreen felt a surge of warmth. She was beautifulâ€”snow white hair, still a young face. How could she be even more lovely than before?

Similar feelings stirred her.

They gazed into each otherâ€™s eyes momentarily, and the years between melted away. Then they literally flew into each otherâ€™s arms.

When I learned from them what had happened, I knew that this wonderful reunion was a story written and directed by the Holy Spirit.

A few days later, they asked me to marry them. It was a I privilege and an honor for me.

This was just one of the many flames of Azusa Street.

Website: http://www.sandhillbiblechurch.org