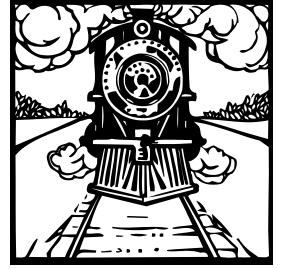


HOLY FRIDAY REFLECTION: The Train Bridge

I want to share with you a true story about a man named John Griffith. In the 1930's he worked as the controller of a huge railroad bridge across the Mississippi River. Every day at certain scheduled times the huge bridge was raised so that barges and other ships might make their way down the river. And according to a schedule, John would lower the bridge so that the freight and passenger trains could rush across.



In the summer of 1937, John Griffith took his then eight-year-old son with him to work for the first time. The boy was excited to watch the big railroad bridge and the trains & boats, and also to see the control house with all kinds of levers over which his daddy had absolute control.

His father took him to an observation deck so that he could watch the boats and trains go by. At noon John put the bridge up to let some ships go by since there would not be a train coming for awhile. He made his way to the observation deck where the two of them had lunch.

Just as John was telling a long story about the trains & boats, he was startled by the shrieking of a train whistle in the distance. He quickly looked at his watch and noticed that it was 1:07.

In the midst of his story telling he had forgotten that the passenger train - the express for Memphis with 400 passengers on board - would soon be roaring across that bridge.

Without panic but very quickly he leaped from the observation deck and ran back to the control tower. He placed his hand upon the massive iron controls and started to close the bridge. But before pulling the lever, he glanced down beneath the bridge to see if there were any ships beneath it.

There a sight caught his eye that made nearly made his heart stop.

His son had slipped from the observation deck and had fallen into the huge gears that operate the bridge. Though the boy was still alive and conscious, his left leg was caught in the cogs of the main gears! John knew that if he pulled that lever his son would be crushed.

His eyes filled with tears of panic, and his head was spinning. What he could do was to take a rope, rush to the observation tower, tie it and lower himself into the gear box, free

his son, bring him back up to the observation deck, and make his way quickly back to the control tower to lower the bridge.

But no sooner had he thought it, than he knew there was no way he could do it in time for the train.

Again, closer than ever, the train whistle sounded. He could hear the wheels clicking over the tracks and the puffing of the engine.

But that was his son!

Yet there were 400 passengers on that train which was roaring toward the bridge. But John Griffith was a father and that was his boy!

.....He knew what he had to do..... so he buried his head in his left arm and pulled the master lever.

That massive bridge lowered into place just as the Memphis Express roared across the Mississippi.

When he lifted his head with his face smeared with tears, he looked into the passing windows of the train.

There were businessmen casually reading their afternoon papers, uniformed conductors looking at their large vest-pocket watches, well-dressed ladies in the dining car sipping coffee, and children pushing long spoons into the dishes of ice cream.

No one looked at the control house and no one looked at the great gear box.

With wrenching agony, John Griffith cried out at the train---- "I sacrificed my son for you! Don't you care?" But nobody heard. They never even looked up from their newspapers, watches, coffee and ice cream.

The Son of God has been sacrificed so that we might have eternal life.

Will we look up from our newspapers, watches, coffee and ice cream?

