

A Song Saves a Life and Career



The Great Depression hit a man named James Cash Penney particularly hard, endangering his very health.

In 1902, in Kemmerer, Wyoming, Penney opened the first store in what was to become the J.C. Penney Co. By 1929, when the stock market crashed, he had increased the number of stores to 1,400. Anxious and desperate because of huge financial losses, he felt he had nothing to live for. Even his family and friends shunned him.

Penney checked himself into the Battle Creek Sanitarium for treatment. He grew so demoralized he expected to die before morning.

Late in the evening, he heard singing coming from the little hospital chapel. The hymn was *God Will Take Care of You*, written by Civilla Durfee Martin. Entering the chapel, Penney listened to the song. The lyrics were: “Be not dismayed whate’er betide; God will take care of you.” The singing was followed by Scripture reading and prayer.

He later wrote: “Suddenly – something happened. I can’t explain it. I can only call it a miracle. I felt as if I had been instantly lifted out of the darkness of a dungeon into warm, brilliant sunlight.” From that day, J.C. Penney was never plagued with worry, and he later called those moments in the chapel “the most dramatic and glorious 20 minutes of my life.”

When he died in 1971 at the age of 95, he left behind 1,600 department stores in his name.

Jimmy Rhodes, Life Care’s longtime director of music services, has repeatedly seen in concerts in our nursing centers all across the country how music is therapy for the soul. Find some time in your day to listen to positive, uplifting, spiritual music on the radio or in live concerts, at church, or in special events held in your facility.

And lift up your own voice in song. Another suggestion is to spend some time in the *Book of Psalms*, a collection of music used by the Israelites of that day.

It is good to sing praises to our God (Psalm 147:1 NKJV).

– Beecher Hunter