

An Empty Chair by the Bed

Leslie Dixon Weatherhead (1893 – 1976) was one of Britain's finest preachers in his day. He was noted for his preaching ministry at City Temple in London.

He told the story of an old Scot who was quite ill, and the family called for their *dominie*, or minister. As he entered the sick room and sat down, he noticed another chair on the opposite side of the bed, a chair that had also been drawn close. The pastor said, "Well, Donald, I see I'm not your first visitor for the day."

The old man looked up, was puzzled for a moment, then recognized from the nod of the head that the pastor had noticed the empty chair.

"Well, Pastor, I'll tell you about that chair. Many years ago, I found it quite difficult to pray, so one day I shared this problem with my pastor. He told me not to worry about kneeling or about placing myself in some pious posture. Instead, he said, 'Just sit down, put a chair opposite you, and imagine Jesus sitting in it, then talk with Him as you would a friend.'"

The aged Scot then added, "I've been doing that ever since."

A short time later, the daughter of the Scot called the pastor. When he answered, she informed him that her father had died very suddenly, and she was quite shaken, for she had no idea death was so near.

Then she continued, "I had just gone to lie down for an hour or two, for he seemed to be sleeping so comfortably. When I went back, he was dead."

Whereupon, she added thoughtfully, "Except now his hand was on the empty chair at the side of the bed. Isn't that strange?"

The minister replied, "No, it's not so strange. I understand."

The story prompts a couple of questions:

1. Do you have such a Friend who sticks closer than a brother, as Proverbs 18:24 describes Him?
2. Upon whom will you be depending when it is time to die?

These are important questions to ponder – at any age of life.

– Beecher Hunter

