

The License Plate Said It

Presbyterian pastor and writer Frederick Buechner recalls one low time in his life when God broke through in an unusual way.

“I remember sitting parked by the roadside once, terribly depressed and afraid about my daughter’s illness and what was going on in our family,” he wrote.

As he was sitting there thinking about his daughter’s illness, he noticed a car that seemed to come from nowhere. His message from God, the word that he most needed to see at that moment, was found on the license plate.

“Out of all the words in the dictionary that I needed most to see exactly then was on that license plate,” Buechner said. “The word was TRUST.”

Just imagine. He was sitting in his car alongside the highway and God’s message was revealed on the license plate of a passing car.

It’s certainly difficult to describe such an experience, Buechner related. “Was the experience something to laugh off as the kind of joke life plays on us every once in a while? Or was it the word of God?” he wondered. “I am willing to believe it was something of both, but for me it was an epiphany.”

The owner of the car turned out to be a trust officer at a local bank. After reading of the incident somewhere, the trust officer paid a personal visit to Buechner one afternoon. He presented Buechner with the license plate bearing the word he so desperately needed that day.

Buechner placed that license plate on a bookshelf where it serves to remind him of his trust in God.

“It is rusty around the edges and a little battered,” he said, “and it is also as holy a relic as I have ever seen.”

The application of this story ...

What are you going through today? Is it the illness of a child or other family member? Are you struggling with financial issues? Is there a fragile relationship threatening to break? Is the Holy Spirit dealing with you about a decision you need to make?

Perhaps this column was sent to you in place of a license plate, and its message for you is: TRUST!

When I am afraid, I put my trust in you. In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I shall not be afraid. What can flesh do to me? (Psalm 56:3-4 ESV).

– Beecher Hunter