

The Shadow of the Truck

Donald Grey Barnhouse, Th.D. (1895 – 1960), was an American Christian preacher, pastor, theologian, radio pioneer, and writer. He pastored the Tenth Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, Pa., from 1927 until his death in 1960. He was leading the way in preaching over the radio on a program known as *The Bible Study Hour*. Today, the program continues to air, and is entitled *Dr. Barnhouse and the Bible*.

Former U.S. Surgeon General C. Everett Koop, who attended the Tenth Presbyterian Church for more than 20 years, said of Barnhouse: “His authoritative voice held my attention, his physical appearance was arresting, and his preaching was teaching of the highest intellectual order. I always marveled at the simplicity of the faith of this very intelligent and learned man.”

Barnhouse was widowed at a young age. The death of his wife, Ruth, left him and a 6-year-old daughter in the home. He had real difficulty working through his own grief, but the hardest part was to comfort and explain the death to his daughter. He later recalled that all of his education and theological training left him at a loss.

One day, he and the little girl were standing on a busy corner at a downtown intersection, waiting for the traffic light to change. Suddenly, a very large truck sped by the corner, briefly blocking out the sun and frightening the little girl.

To comfort her, Dr. Barnhouse picked her up, and in a moment the wisdom of God broke through and he was able to explain to his daughter what had just happened.

“When you saw the truck pass, it scared you, but let me ask you, had you rather be struck by the truck or the shadow of the truck?”

She replied, “Of course, the shadow.”

Dr. Barnhouse told his daughter, “When your mother died, she was only hit by the shadow of death because Jesus was hit by the truck (death).”



And that is important for all of us to remember, and to be assured. The psalmist reminds that God is with us, even though we walk through the valley of the shadow of death.

– Beecher Hunter