

## *The Towel*

Christ the Redeemer Church

June 13, 2010

Third Sunday after Pentecost/Sunday after week at Glorieta Camp as Counselor with 16 youth and 4 adults from our CTRC Church

Luke 7:36 - 8:3

Rev Gary L. Smith

[www.christredeemerchurch.com](http://www.christredeemerchurch.com)

Monday evening at Glorieta.

I am organized. I like things in order. People assume that the military made me this way. I tell them, "No, my MOM made this way." I could not go to school each day until my room was picked up and my bed was neatly made. I love order. I can handle anything the day throws at me if I have some organized space and order in my private world.

I am aging, I like my sleep, I like quiet, I like my bathroom privacy, I like my early morning routine and I like things neatly done and in order. I was in the cabin room with 10 boys from CTRC youth group this past week.

I would not let the boys pick their beds in our bunkroom at Glorieta until after I picked MY bed. I told them, "Boys, this is not a democracy this week. This is a dictatorship. And I as dictator will decide if and when I want a democratic vote or input from you."

I told the boys that I get first pick on which bed in the cabin I would get. I took the bottom bunk at the end of the room furthest from the noisy and partially broken window air conditioning units. Nearest the door to cut off any boy sneaking out to go pray with the girls in the middle of the night. Nearest the sink so I could brush my teeth in privacy late at night and early in the morning.

After my first shower, I hung my large towel neatly over the end of my bed, right by the sink, so it would be dried out for my next shower. I brought extra towels and washcloths but the boys who forgot their towels soon had my extras. At least some boys WANTED towels to shower. It was going to be a long week. I am 57 and vowed years ago to never again do another week-long youth camp.

Brenden forgot his towel. I had no more towels to loan. I was left with only my one towel for the whole week. Later that night I saw him coming back from a shower. I asked him what he did for a towel. He said he borrowed Daniel's towel. I had loaned Daniel my towel. Daniel asked me how I knew to bring a towel for him. I said, "Dads are paid to do things like that." Later that night I complimented Daniel on loaning his only towel to Brenden. Daniel said, "I did not loan my towel to Brenden." Brenden has swiped and used Daniel's towel WHILE Daniel was IN the shower. I knew it was going to be a long week.

I quit Youth Ministry years ago, vowing when I moved here in 2003 that I was not going to do any more week-long youth camps. God and I had a deal. God said he would give

me some of what I wanted in life here in San Marcos, including no more youth camps, if I would agree to remain in ministry. We had a deal, God and me. No camps.

But fragile Cris, 20 years my junior in age, broke his cute little frail leg playing basketball last week. So I got called out of the Hall of Fame Youth Ministry retirement. I was brought kicking and screaming back into Action as a back-up fro these boys. .

Every morning I would shower at 5:30 am...by myself. No line at 5:30 am. I would hang my towel neatly over the end of my bed to dry, getting it ready to use the next morning.

I can handle anything as long as I have my neat little space, my clean little towel, my little shoes under my bed, and cleanliness and order. I told Daniel when he moved out last month "If your house becomes a pig pen then I am not visiting you. I don't do pig pens." I told the CTRC boys the same thing this week..."Don't make this cabin room a pig pen. Mess up your bed but not the main walking areas. No pig pens."

All went well until midnight Thursday night.

Midnight Thursday night. I was in bed and telling the boys they needed to finish brushing their teeth and get into bed. I watched Cole brush his teeth in the sink at the foot of my bed. He brushed well. Then he finished brushing his teeth...and then he wiped off the toothpaste from his mouth...on my towel.

He wiped his toothpaste on my towel. I screamed, "Cole, what are you doing wiping your mouth on MY towel? Did you think I put that towel there for you? Do you think I am your mother who put that towel there for YOU?"

He said, "Yes, I thought that was why that towel was there...for me to use. I never thought about who put it there. I just used it to wipe off my mouth all week"

All week? I yelled out to ALL the boys "Who ELSE has been using my towel to wipe their mouths with this week?"

One by one, boys would say "Oh, yeah. I have been wiping my mouth and hands on that towel all week. I thought it was put there for me to use." I asked the boys if they had ANY idea where that towel had been this week. They shrugged. It did not matter to them.

As the speaker this week said, "This is not SUPER Christianity. This is Christianity." Nothing out of the ordinary this week. Just youth ministry on our part.

Youth ministry will suck the life out of you and will claim even your private shower towel. This is Christianity. Amen.

*(The actual towel, unwashed, was hanging on our altar rail this morning. Brenda told the congregation they could wipe their hands and mouths on it after communion.)*