

By the Lakeside

Ah... these jobs didn't come often; relaxing by the lakeside at a public picnic grounds directing the building of a new pavilion and play area. Another unique feature; I was training an out of state civil engineering student. He had come to Minnesota hoping to gain engineering skills and also to satisfy his appetite for fishing. Yet, something greater was to happen of which he was unaware.

He was very quiet and appeared fairly insecure the first time I met him. The first year engineering student had no experience, and was 1,300 miles from home. To my delight, he was put on my crew and so began our friendship.

The student showed great curiosity not only for engineering, but also for life in the north. It was a joy to chat with him. In time I brought up the topic of spiritual beliefs; he seemed not to care. I prayed that he would. You see, he was like many others, seeking fulfillment without Christ.

It was a Monday at the construction site when my new friend opened up. The day before he had had heart palpitations; he now shared his fears. Sitting by the lakeside we discussed the Bible and its answers to life in Jesus Christ. He listened intently and at the same time struggled inwardly. Like many, he thought eternal life was to be earned, not received as a gift. He had never heard... *"For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast"* Eph 2:8, 9. He began to grasp the difference. By grace the sinner receives the unearned gift of life through faith in Christ alone. This discussion continued for the remainder of the summer.

It was the next summer when my friend placed his faith in Jesus Christ and was eternally saved. *"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name..."* John 1:12. What a joy we now shared!

When in Minnesota, I visit that picnic grounds and am pleasantly reminded of that day by the lakeside, when my friend first heard of God's grace!