

## Buckets and Rainbows

*“What’re we going to eat? How long before they shut off the utilities and foreclose?”*

The number of people job hunting today is escalating with no light at the end of the tunnel. By contrast I think of the day not long after I got my first two-wheeled bike. Oh was it a gem. I bragged on it for weeks.

It must have been about 3 weeks after I got my bike that my buddy Thomas and I made very special plans for the next rainbow we saw. Hardly had the rain stopped as we put our plan into operation. We each had a modest sized plastic bucket hanging from our bikes as we located the direction of the expected rainbow. Off we both rode certain that we’d be back in a couple hours with our buckets filled from the rainbow’s pot-o-gold.

Thomas and I hadn’t yet reached our teen years but were smart enough to know the importance of buckets - whether you have a job or not. See - pockets are for nickels, frogs, and Captain Midnight decoder rings. But anyone worth their salt has to have a bucket and know how to use it.

Buckets hold water to put out fires, carry milk from the barn to make butter and ice cream. Blockhead the mule gets fed his grain from a bucket and my dad carried his dinner in a bucket with a lid - that is before his company closed down.

A fancy-painted coal bucket sits in the corner of my room just aching to be of some use. I never told them so, but the stress and troubled discussions of mom and dad were spilling over onto me. Often I’d lie on my bed staring at the things in my room asking them how they could help me. Almost like a magnet my eyes often came to rest on the empty useless coal bucket.

I still don’t know what started me doing it, but I began writing my worries and troubles on little pieces of paper and dropped them in the coal bucket. After a few times I began thinking of the fancy-painted coal bucket as a mailbox to God. In some peculiar way I felt relieved as I’d put one burden of my heart after another in the bucket.

As God’s mailbox got fuller, I tried to think of a way to turn the contents into fuel oil or flour for mama’s pantry. Oh how I wished I could be God for just one minute. Just long enough to create bone deep smiles on mama and daddy. Just long enough to show them some of the neat things God can do that I learned about in Vacation Bible School. Just long enough to show them the real light at the end of the tunnel of employment despair is actually a Person with open arms and a bucket of promises far more precious than anything that our imagination can find at the rainbow’s end.

One day while mama was cleaning my room she knocked over the coal bucket. In picking up the strips of paper with my messages, she began reading them. I never never

wanted to make mama cry but she sure did that day.

Not quite a week later our family had a party - with cake and ice cream cold enough to freeze your eyeballs. It was the best party 'cuz mama and daddy held hands with big smiles on their faces. Daddy said, "Son - every party has gifts. Your mother and I want you to know that YOU are a gift. You're a precious gift God has given to this family." You never saw a huggin' session like that and you never will.

That night I removed all the contents of my coal bucket and told all the objects in my room: "Wow! God really does answer His mail!" (End of Story)