
The Writer's Inkhorn

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Continuing Reflections on the Word for Your Personal Growth in Christ

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My Mother: Writer, Cook, Tailor, Missionary, Left Me Some Work to Do!



Scripture: Ecclesiastes 9:10

*Whatever your hands find to do, do it
with your might...*

She left me work. I mean, seriously! I found a folder with about 43 poems never before published. Then, I found about three or so other small books that were unpublished as well. And at the time of her death, one book was at the printer and another one was ready to be edited for printing (both of which were completed shortly after her demise).

It is not like I don't have my *own* work to do, right? Whew! But, I *know* I cannot say "no." I owe a debt of gratitude to the one who started me on this path. SMH. (For those of you readers who are not social media-savvy, that is just an abbreviation for "*shaking my head*"), literally. So, one of my projects for 2019 is to republish her book of inspirational poems **with the new ones included**, to be released in 2020, the 25th anniversary of her departure from here to eternity. Stay tuned to how to get your copy when it becomes available.

In this issue of the *Writer's Inkhorn*, I share with you some treasures from the life of my mother, the writer, first. Her influence on my life as a writer was beyond measure. Perhaps, I'll get to some other things, here, but if not, there will be stories for another time.

As a tribute to my mother, at church on this past Mother's Day, instead of just making

the *usual* celebratory remarks of her life, which was certainly a life well-lived, I chose instead to recite one of her poems. Many people in our congregation have never had the

pleasure of meeting my mother since she has been gone for nearly 25 years. Yet, there are many who are still with us who knew, remember, and loved her and this ministry of writing she so freely shared with us. My mother discovered her gift and began writing while she was confined to the tuberculosis sanatorium for nearly two years, when I was a young toddler. (It is interesting how being confined can make us still enough to hear what God has put within us / in our spirits.)

Of course, after her release, she continued to write across a spectrum of topics, but she was most well-known for those "readings" (that's what they were called back then) that she would recite at churches in various programs, around church topics. I chose to recite one of the two she is probably most remembered for: "Don't Be a Chain-Holder" and "You'd Better Get Up from There." I share with you the text of Chain-Holder below. Mother said that in the country people often put chains around their livestock to keep them from wandering off. Contextually, we are probably talking the early 60s when this was written, so I changed just a few words to keep it relevant. Do enjoy.

Don't Be a Chain-Holder

Loose your chains and slack your reins,
Because if your chains get rusty
And your links start to break,
You'd better watch out there, Brother,
You're headed for the lake.

People don't mind being members
If they can tie the preacher with their
chains;
They'll say, "I'll stay here and work as
long as I can hold the reins."
Once they get their chain around his
neck, he's afraid to preach the truth,
Because if he comes across something
they don't like, he knows what they're
gon' do.
He'd better not come across liars and
they're in that stage,
They'll pull the reins so tight you can see
that look in their face.
They'll say, "I'll fix his business; he's
picking on me, today;
But when I get through with him *this*
year, *next* year *he'll* know what to say.
Yes, his *anniversary* is coming up, and
the *mortgage* has got to be paid;
The *organ* note is behind, and the *gas*
man'll be looking in his face;
And when he asks *me* to raise an
offering, I'm going to ask someone *else*
to take my place,
"Cause I haven't forgotten how he
picked on me right before my face!"
But if that chain-holder's hands slip and
he doesn't know what he's doing,
Just say, "Hell, open wide your mouth;
one chain-holder is coming home."

There are members in the church with
their buddies by their sides;
The member will say, "We can work
together if you let me be your guide."
Now, that's another chain-holder and
you'd better believe he's well supplied;
If you give him a possible chance, he'll
chain you by-and-by.
Once he gets his chain around *your* neck,
and he doesn't like what's being said,
He's tightening on the reins when you
see him shake his head.
He won't help sing a song; he won't help
pray a prayer;

He'll hunch his buddy in the side and
say, "I don't like what's going on;
Git yo' family together; we're going
home."
But if that chain-holder's hands slip and
he loses his powerful grip,
Just say, "Hell, open wide your mouth;
another chain-holder is taking a trip."

The deacons will call a meeting and say,
"Brother Pastor, we want *you* to be
here, today,
Just to sit in and listen to what *we* have
to say."
One ol' deacon sittin' in the corner is
holding the reins so tight
That if someone personates him, that
brother will be ready to fight!
Yes, his *chain* has gotten rusty and
somebody keeps breaking through;
But don't you worry about a thing; hell
can hold him, too!

Applause. Applause.

That poem has always been one that is so
much fun to recite. Insightful, telling, a story
of what church life is and can be about when
we are not careful to check our selfish and
self-serving attitudes and ambitions. It is a
depiction of what can happen when we forget
that we are attending to the ***Lord's*** work, or
rather, should be.

Oh, sure, perhaps the contexts change slightly
and references connected to those contexts are
a bit altered, but the motivating factors behind
our thoughts and actions often remain. Satan is
insidious like that, and when we are not wise,
he slips in and takes control of our thoughts
and will, and has us acting out in unseemly
ways, like children throwing temper-tantrums
when we cannot have our own way.

The second poem I include here is probably
the most remembered and most requested and

recited. Its title, "You'd Better Get Up from There," speaks for itself, as you'll read shortly. Do enjoy this one as well.

You'd Better Get Up from There!

Some people sit in church and they don't even fear;
They've been sitting there so long that they have a special chair;
But I want to tell you, one day Jesus is coming,
You'd better get up from there.

You will make promises to the church and promises to God;
You won't even keep them, then you'll say, "I wonder what makes the times so hard."
You will work across town and everywhere,
And when your church needs you, you are nowhere near;
But I want to tell you people that have no fear,
One day Jesus is coming; you'd better get up from there.

You will look at the preacher and say, "We have a man of God."
But don't you know the preacher works too hard?
He works hard, spiritually, and naturally, too;
He does the job the deacons ought to do.
You may be slothful and don't seem to care,
But one day Jesus is coming; you'd better get up from there.

If the Lord should come and call the preacher away,
Who among you would say, "I'll take his place"?
But you would say, "It takes too much suffering to wear a *preacher's* shoes,"
'Cause you know one day that you've got to lose.

You will remember the times when the bills were behind,

And *the preacher* had to spend his last dime;
You'll remember when the nights were cold and the journey was long,
And *the preacher* had to carry some poor person home.
If you want to go to heaven, you've got to work and pay your fare,
You can't sit down; you'd better get up from there.

You will mumble and grumble when the offering is being raised,
And if they mention tithes, they might as well spit in your face;
But if you're still robbing, you ain't getting nowhere;
Make up your mind, and get up from there.

You will work hard all the week and can't get to Sunday school on time,
And when they ask you for an offering, you may squeeze out a dime;
Sitting there looking all proud, trying to look fair,
One day Jesus is coming; you'd better get up from there.

If you want to go to heaven, you've got to work and pay your fare,
Because no hypocrites, no liars, no backbiters, no robbers, and no slothful person
Shall have any inheritance in the kingdom of heaven and of God;
So stop sitting down rattling, wearing out the chairs,
God wants you to work; you'd better get up from there.
If you have the Holy Ghost and a burning fire,
You can't sit down: you'll get up from there.

Applause! Bravo! Encore!

Quite a writer and storyteller my mother was, wouldn't you say? No wonder Edward Bulwer-Lytton said, "The pen is mightier than the sword." The writer has the ability to take

our pain, our causes, our hopes, and our flaws, and give them back to us in ways which we cannot readily refuse: in play, in poetic and prophetic form, in reproof and correction and instruction, in living lives that are worthy of that to which we have been called by God.

I am just reflecting on the life of the writer and how essential that was and is to the God of the universe, Who assigned writers to carry His message across time to the generations. We know, without excuse, what is the will of our heavenly Father, and that is, that we might live for Him in reverential fear. Our Bible is the greatest testament of the important work that writers do in *every* period of human history.

Even this instrument, *The Writer's Inkhorn*, from its inception, is a reminder to me of the importance of the writer, still. I share with you excerpts of that first short issue to give you the context for it. It was June 18, 2010, when I opened my Bible to Ezekiel the 9th chapter and found something that profoundly impacted me as a writer and Bible teacher. However, I did what the best teachers do; I backed up to chapter 8 to see what was really going on:

Chapter 8 tells of a vision that God gave the prophet Ezekiel, about the many abominations that the land of Judah was committing, and the idolatrous worship in which her leaders and people were involved. Then, in Chapter 9, God calls for restitution and gives the prophet what to do. God specifically tells Ezekiel to call for six men with slaughtering weapons in their hand, for He is about to execute judgment upon the nation. In Chapter 9, I was struck especially by the latter parts of verses 2 and 3, and verses 4 and 11. I include them here for your information.

*And one man among them was clothed with linen, with a **writer's inkhorn** by his side ...
And he called to the man clothed with linen, which had **the writer's inkhorn** by his side:*

And the Lord said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of

Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof...

*And, behold, the man clothed with linen, which had the inkhorn by his side, reported the matter, saying, **I have done as thou hast commanded me.***

The verses that are *not* included here, explain that the purpose of the mark on the forehead for those who were weeping because of the sin of their people, was to preserve the lives of those whose hearts remained true to the God of Israel. When destruction came, those who bore the mark of the man with *the writer's inkhorn* would be preserved.

Upon reading the last verse, I began to sense immediately that I am a woman with the *writer's inkhorn* in my day, and the word that God gives me to give His people, in messages, in classes, through my writing, is given to mark their lives in such a way that if they will hear and take heed, their lives will be preserved, in natural and spiritual ways. *I* am also warned that there ought to be a "marked" difference on anyone who comes through my classes for any length of time, if they are truly receiving the word that is being given, or else, *I* am not being God's instrument. *But*, the challenge will *also* be for *you* (students, learners, readers) to fight to maintain the ground that you have gained and will gain that you might receive the greater blessings upon your life.

Whatever God has told *you*, be quick to do it. It is my hope that in the end, we might all have this testimony: "***I have done as you have commanded me.***"

Your Teacher and Sister,
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You may now read the *Writer's Inkhorn* online at www.marywebstermoore.com/devotional

