

A Great Day in the Kingdom – 6/30/23

When I was a young boy we had a special houseguest one summer. He was an evangelist from New York City. This man was a true evangelist, in that he was focused on building God's Kingdom. He could share some of the most intriguing stories about God sightings on Earth. I remembered Tony being a very special person, no doubt about it.

Years later I was a seminary student at Asbury Theological Seminary and noticed on the bookshelf in the student book store was one copy of out of many of Tony's books. His full name was Tony Campolo. I distinctly remember how kind he was to our family. Although his stay was only two nights, some of his stories have stuck with me forever. I opened the book and read a few of his stories that had been published.

One particular story involved a woman sitting next to Tony on a flight. He noticed an "A" on her forehead. He looked again, as it was still there. She had been teary eyed during the entire four- hour flight. Tony introduced himself and she shared the mistake she had made not long before, and that she was going back home, escaping further scrutiny by her community.

Tony shared that at times God has given him the vision he needed to see what needed to be seen, in order to provide pastoral ministry with those whom he encountered. I believe Tony saw the "A." He counseled with the woman and by the end of the flight, she felt that she could go on with life, and her sins did not define her. We are no different than that very lady. We are aware of our sinful nature, and although it is not what defines us, we do feel at times labeled with the sin we commit.

1 John 5:17, All wrongdoing is sin, but there is sin that does not lead to death.

It turns out that the woman on the plane had asked God for forgiveness, yet could not forgive herself. Tony convinced this child of God that God would always provide for room for new beginnings. Tony shared that after their conversation, the letter was gone. Again, I do believe Tony saw the letter on her forehead. I also believe, just like the Lord does with our sin, after confessing through Christ our Savior, the transgressions are erased. Praise God!!!

Have a Blessed Week! Love to You All!!!

Pastor Joel

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, I am a sinner in need of forgiveness. As you forgive me, I ask that you help me to forgive myself. Just as others should not label us, we know that we should not label others. This includes us labeling ourselves.

Thank You for leading me into Your Will and Your Way! In the name of the Risen Christ Jesus I Pray. AMEN!!!