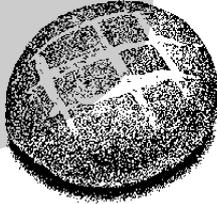


# Christ's Bread



This is the true experience of a man named Donley. After being out of work for months, he finally resorted to begging, which he despised with all his soul. One cold winter evening he stood by a private club and saw a man and his wife entering. Donley asked the man for money to buy food.

"Sorry, fellow, but I don't have any change," the man replied.

The woman overheard the conversation and asked, "What did that poor fellow want?"

"The price of a meal. Said he was hungry," replied her husband.

"Oh, Larry! We can't go in and eat a meal we don't need and leave a hungry man out here."

"There's one on every corner now. He probably wants the money for booze."

"But I have some change. Let me give him something."

Donley had his back turned to them, but he heard every word. Embarrassed, he was about to run away, when he heard the woman's kind voice: "Here's a dollar. Buy yourself food. And don't lose courage, even if things do look hard. There's a job for you somewhere. I hope you'll find it soon!"

"Thanks, lady. You've given me a fresh start and a new heart. I'll never forget your kindness."

"You'll be eating Christ's bread. Pass it on," she said with a friendly smile, as if he were a man and not a bum. An electric shock passed through him.

Donley found a cheap eating place, spent fifty cents, and resolved to save the rest for another day. He would be eating Christ's bread for two days. Again that feeling like an electric shock passed over him. *Christ's bread!*

*But wait!* he thought. *I can't save up Christ's bread just for myself!* He seemed to hear the echo of an old hymn, humming in his memory—a hymn he had learned as a boy in Sunday school.

Just then an old man shuffled past. *Maybe the old fellow is hungry,* Donley thought. *Christ's bread must be shared.*

"Hey!" Donley called after him. "What would you say to going in and getting a good meal?"

The old man turned, blinking at Donley. "Are you serious, Bud?"

The old man couldn't believe his good fortune until he was seated at an oilcloth table with a bowl of stew before him. During the meal Donley noticed that the old man was wrapping up part of his bread in a paper napkin. "Saving some for tomorrow?" he asked.

"No, no. There's a kid down my way. He's had tough luck and was crying when I left. He's hungry. I aim to give him the bread."

*Christ's bread.* The woman's words returned to Donley once more and he had the odd feeling that there was a third Guest at that oilcloth table. Far-off church chimes seemed to play that old hymn again in his mind.

The two men took the bread to the hungry boy, who began to eat greedily. Then suddenly he stopped and called a dog—a frightened, lost dog.

"Here you go, doggie. You can have half of it," said the boy.

*Christ's bread! Ah, yes. It would go to the four-footed brother too. St. Francis of Assisi would have done that,* Donley thought. The kid acted like a new boy now. He stood up and started to sell his newspapers.

"Good-bye," said Donley to the old man. "There's a job for you somewhere. You'll find it soon. Just hang on. You know"—his voice sank to a whisper—"this food that we've all just eaten is Christ's bread. A lady told me so when she gave me the dollar I bought it with. Good things are going to happen for us!"

As the old man left, Donley turned and found the lost dog nosing at his leg. He bent over to pat it and discovered a collar around its neck. Its owner's name was on the collar.

So Donley took the long walk uptown to the owner's home and rang the bell. When the owner came to the door and saw his lost dog, he was delighted.

Then his expression soured. He opened his mouth to say sharply: "Didn't you steal that dog just to get a reward?"—But he didn't. There was a certain dignity about Donley that stopped him. Instead he said, "I offered a reward in last night's paper. Ten dollars. Here it is!"

Donley looked at the bill, half-dazed. "I can't take that," he said softly. "I just wanted to do the dog a good turn."

"Take it! What you did is worth far more than that to me!—And do you want a job? Come to my office tomorrow. I need a man who has your integrity."

As Donley started off down the avenue, that old hymn was singing in his soul, one he had remembered from childhood: "Break Thou the Bread of Life."

Adapted from a story by Zelia M. Walters

The light of your smile, the kindness of your face, the influence of your life, can shed light on many, and have an amazing effect on some people you might think would be the least likely to be impressed. When they feel your love and you tell them it's God's love, they can't help but stop and think, "Maybe Somebody up there *does* love me!" It changes their whole outlook and gives them a real *uplook!* So love!

—David Brandt Berg