

## A Prayer for Baby Brother

It was a Christmas I will never forget. I had just broken into journalism, landing a job at the Pine Knob Gazette. It wasn't exactly the New York Times or Boston Globe, but nonetheless, I was officially a journalist.

I covered local stories for the whole county. I reported hot breaking news items like who wore a new hat to the garden club meeting, a defiant farmer who painted his red barn green, and a grandmother who dug up a potato in her garden she claimed looked just like Elvis.

On the "less serious side" I also handled the "Dear Santa" page. The letters the post office received addressed to "Santa", were brought by the newspaper office on the way to the North Pole. I enjoyed reading the children's letters asking for everything from baby dolls to baseball bats, and puppies to ponies. The ones that caught my fancy were printed on the "Dear Santa" page in the child's own writing. It had come to be a Christmas tradition at the Pine Knob Gazette and readers loved it.

It was about ten days before Christmas. I was sitting at my desk looking at the crayon addressed letters to Santa, when one caught my eye. It was addressed to "Mr. Jesus". I opened the envelope and read the child's hand writing:

"Dear Jesus,

Happy Birthday. Baby Brother is very sick. Mommy says he is going to heaven soon. I don't want him to. My Sunday School teacher said you heal the sick. Please make Baby Brother get better. He is 5 days old. I love him."

My eyes had tears in them as I turned the letter over and took another look at the envelope, hoping to find a clue as to whom the young writer might be.

I debated whether to print the letter. It didn't seem to fit in with all the light-hearted, whimsical Christmas dreams of future cowboys and ballerinas. Of course, I decided to print it. It was a great human-interest story. I devoted it to its own section, along with an article reflecting the real meaning of Christmas.

When the article came out, the paper was inundated with callers about the infant known only as "Baby Brother". Offers of baby clothes, money and free

medical care were made. Throughout the county, the topic of conversation was “Baby Brother”. Signs filled the community reading, “Pray For Baby Brother”. People seemed to be more genuinely concerned for one another, taking the time to visit, or just stop and say hello. Charities reported contributions were up. It seemed everyone wanted to help “Baby Brother”, but not knowing how, they just helped everyone they could. A blanket of love and concern seemed to cover the entire community.

When Christmas day arrived, I had a warm feeling from all the kindness and generosity I had witnessed, and proud to be a part of. It was awesome how such a sad circumstance could bring out such good in people. However, down deep I had a concern mingled with an almost childlike hope, had “Baby Brother” lived until Christmas?

The day after Christmas I was back at work. Lost in thought, I looked up to see a woman with a blanket clad baby in her arms and a little girl clinging to her hand. “Can I help you?” I said in a somewhat startled voice.

The lady smiled and said, “We’re here to thank you. This is Lucy,” as she gently nudged the little girl forward.

In an excited voice, with a big smile on her face she blurted out, “Baby Brother is all better!”

Tears filled my eyes, and relief filled my heart as I enthusiastically confirmed, “He is?”

“Yes,” she said confidently, “Jesus made him all better!”

I nodded toward the bundle the lady was holding. “Is that him?” I asked.

With a sweet voice, she cocked her head and said, “No ma’am. That’s my little sister Sarah.”

I had a nice conversation with Lucy and her mother. I learned all about Baby Brother, his critical condition and miraculous recovery. My faith was lifted, and I realized the importance of a child’s prayer. However, I was in a quandary as what to do. Should I keep it to myself, or should I tell my readers that the entire community was turned around by this child’s prayer for a calf she had named Baby Brother?

Would people feel as though they had been duped? Would they feel silly, or angry, to discover they had been earnestly praying for a calf? When little Lucy had

written the letter, it was a sincere prayer to Jesus for the pet she loved. She thought it was just between Jesus and her. When I printed the letter, I like everyone else thought “Baby Brother” was in fact, her little baby brother. Then I thought about all the good that was done. Neighbors were a little more neighborly, friends were a little friendlier, even brothers were a little more brotherly. I realized this child’s simple prayer for her beloved pet made us all better people. It helped us to examine our own hearts and lend a helping hand to our neighbor. I knew we had witnessed a Christmas miracle and the power of a child’s prayer.

The next day’s edition had the front-page headline, “Baby Brother Makes Miraculous Recovery”. The article thanked everyone for their outpouring of generosity and kindness. It reflected how a child’s simple prayer could bring out the best in an entire community and touch the hearts of so many people. And the fact that Baby Brother was a calf...well that’s just between Jesus, Lucy’s family and me.

Jesus loves each one of us and is concerned about us. Our cares may seem insignificant to others, but the bible tells us to cast our cares upon Jesus, because He cares for us.

*Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.*  
*1 Peter 5:7*

During the Christmas season we celebrate Jesus as the babe in the manger. Let’s remember too, that Jesus grew up to be a perfect man and freely gave his life for us. After having been beaten, he died on the cross for our sins. He loves each of us so much, that he took the punishment for our sin, so that when this life is over, we can have a home in heaven.

*Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.*  
*1 Peter 2:24*

It is our sincere prayer that if you have not already received Jesus, that right now, you will ask Jesus to forgive you and help you to turn from your sin.

*But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name. St. John 1:12*