

You Live in a Shack

When I was in elementary school, a new girl came to our school. Corrine was very tall and towered over everyone. She decided that I was a good person to bully. She would walk behind me on the way home and sing song the phrase, "You live in a shack." It was humiliating but not overly harmful except that until that time I did not realize how poor we were. As luck would have it, Corrine was one of the students that I was given to help with here reading. She could not read. Now we were in 6th grade during this time and my assigned place to do reading with others was just outside the principal's office. Our principal was a good man and had always been kind to me, but we knew about the paddle he kept in his office, and he did not allow for nonsense. As we sat down to do our reading there were 4 of us, myself, and 3 students from my grade that I was helping with their reading. Corrine was there and a boy that I had known for years, and another girl. Corrine immediately began doing her singsong and telling the others about where I lived. Johnny knew since he lived down the street from me. He tried to defend me by saying the house was nice inside which amazed me since he had never been inside my house. I decided that I had to rein this in and reminded them all that we were there to read and if we didn't do the reading our teacher would be upset. As I was saying this, I looked up and the principal was coming out of his office. He heard what I said and smiled at me and gave me a nod. I realized somewhere along the way that I did not have to let others define me. That Corrine at 6 foot in 6th grade and unable to read also had problems, possibly bigger than mine. I would work my way out of poverty, but I would often wonder if Corrine would ever know the joy of reading. God entered my life and gave me purpose and strength; I hope that Corrine found that.

Psalm 105:1-4 Give thanks to the Lord, call on his name; make known among the nations what he has done. Sing to him, sing praise to him; tell of all his wonderful acts. Glory in his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the Lord, rejoice. Look to the Lord and his strength; seek his face always.

Lord, be with us this day. Give us the strength to trust you, to trust your plan. Help us, Lord, when we feel alone and forgotten to realize that we are not alone, that you walk with us, that you will not desert us. That though we may be tested you are our strength and shield. Be with those who feel like outsiders, may they be comforted. Be especially with our youth who sometimes feel so alone. Be with those who grieve, those who are ill, and those who are alone and lonely. Be with our church, that all who enter our doors feel welcomed and accepted. Bless our pastor and our leaders. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Grace Epperson