

FIVE MINUTES WITH TOM MOOTY

(Column Number 2236)

"FALLING THROUGH THE CRACKS"

Now that we have gotten the mystery of "The Shaking Steeple" all hashed out, maybe we can move on down the yellow brick to bigger and better things.

I have never claimed to have been born here in Newport; but I was born in Tennessee; and we moved here when I was seven and in the second grade. I thought everybody knew that; but apparently some did not. So, I was a "fereigners" to these here hills for at least a couple of lifetimes.

But I know what that title above means; and I s'pose most of you do as well - "falling through the cracks".

I grew up (not born) in this county; and, as I have said before, none of us had anything; but we didn't know we didn't have anything, so we were all happy with what we had or didn't have. I drive around town and look at some of the places both me and my friends lived (the ones that are still standing) and I think to myself, "My, my! How did so many kids grow up in that little place"?

I think that about my home place up in Eastport (across Lincoln Avenue from the frogpond). It has been added to and remodeled several times: bedrooms added and enlarged, family room added,

kitchen enlarged but, you see, I grew up "back then" when we didn't have all that room.

After Bobby (The Music Man) moved back to become the band director at Cocke County High School, his room was crafted from what used to be a screened in side porch where we used to play all sorts of games on rainy days and watch the Lord's fireworks display in the heavens.

Freddy's (The Big Ugly) room was a spacious "ten by tenner" which was later enlarged to become mom and dad's master bed room. I usually slept on the "eight by five" back porch in the summer time (by choice) on bunk beds because it was cooler (what's this new fangled gadget called air conditioning).

We didn't have a front porch; we had a "stoop" made of concrete and cinder blocks. It was very small, and therefore, had no room to sit on the ole rocking chair and watch the world whiz by Fifth Street. That concrete floor was important; because there were no slabs or boards for a floor, and therefore, no "cracks to fall through".

Thus, we have finally arrived at my main idea for this column.

I was up at "The Wal-Mart" the other day, found my stuff, and made my way to the "express lane" with my "ten items or less". Mary was very friendly and nice, made me feel important with my "ten items or less" purchase. Things went well, pleasantries were exchanged, and progress was being made to send me on my way - until I swiped my card in that little gadget. Mary began punching keys and that sickening

"sound of nothing happening" came over the express lane like an anvil cloud that signals an impending tornado. Punch, punch, punch, and nothing. My identity had disappeared somewhere in the Wall Mart!

It was as if I didn't exist anymore! I was standing right there before God and Mary; but I wasn't! I wasn't there; I wasn't anywhere! I had fallen through the cracks like a diamond ring (or in my case, a lump of coal).

Ever had that experience? I used to love to go visit friends and family with great big ole front porches; with swings and chairs and everything and real cracks in the planking; and stuff would fall through those cracks that we got to go and find - and we would find all sorts of valuable stuff that had fallen through the cracks.

You know what I mean; really interesting stuff that would occupy our time for another hour or two sorting it all out. After all, what else were we going to do? Presidents Truman and Eisenhower had all the big stuff already solved - or were at least working on it.

That never happens when you come to Jesus Christ! You never fall through the cracks with Him. You might feel as though you are the least of the smallest of the littlest in the family of God; but, I promise you, you are not going to ever be forgotten. You will never fall through the cracks - He doesn't have any cracks - but even if He did, you are too important to Him for Him to ever lose track of you.

Simple truth of the matter is that He knows you my name and He loves you by name; and the least of the smallest of the littlest are very

important to God. Let's face it, even the smallest cog on the littlest gear on the most miniscule shaft in the motor has to mesh up with something or the whole thing comes to a screeching halt!

God loves you; and wants you to be in His Family - by invitation only - so consider yourself invited - and welcome! Need help? I'm there, man.

By the way, I got my identity back; as Mary punched her buttons and worked her magic and - bingo - I'm baaaaaaaaaack!

Aren't you glad? Miss 'Nita sure was, and she didn't even know I was missing - until I wrote this column.

Tom Mooty writes this column for the Wednesday and Weekend Editions of the Newport Plain Talk; and serves as pastor to Newport's West End Baptist Church. Your comments about these columns are appreciated (especially the good ones); send them to the Editor of the paper. You can contact Mooty at tommooty15@gmail.com or P.O. Box 851 in Newport or call 865-617-8387.