

DENNIS

My name is Dennis Sanders. I'm one of the twins. I'm the boy. You already know we go to the Bible School. This is my year on, and I'm not doing very well. I'm studying to be a preacher. *(DENNIS pulls out a folded scrap of paper. To say DENNIS is a poor public speaker is an understatement. That his mother wrote the sermonette goes without saying.)* The greatest day of my life was when I was saved. And my favorite holiday, and not because of the new dresses, is Easter.

Because Easter symbolizes the death of Jesus for my own personal sins. I know that if Jesus had not spilt His blood for me personally, that even though I try to keep my sins to a minimum, I would wind up . . . *(DENNIS has lost the rest of his sermonette. He looks through his pockets. Frantically)* I guess the rest of it is on the bus.

We turned the bus over trying to get here tonight. Everybody was upsidedownwards. I reckon my sermonette got lost in the fray. *(Pause.)* My Mama wrote it. I'm no good talkin' to people, and Mama . . .

(DENNIS hangs his head for a long moment. Is he crying? Praying? THE SANDERS hold their breath. Finally, he places the paper on the pulpit and quietly says:) The Lord has called me to preach, and I believe He'll fill my mouth. *(DENNIS moves to the side of the pulpit and waits a moment for God's inspiration. He begins quietly.)* When I was little bitty, I would kneel and pray through with the grown folks – the big sinners. And they'd say to me, Dennis, you're not a bad boy. But I felt I had the potential of all the evil that y'all big folks have, I just hadn't done it yet.

And right then, I committed my life to preaching. I'd turn up a five-gallon can and try preaching to my sisters. When they'd laugh at me, I'd take up my dog and pray for him. I'd say, *(Addressing his dog.)* Rufus, Jesus can save you. He can take up your soul and make it His own. Give him your soul, boy. Give it to him today. *(Talking to Rufus begins to free DENNIS up.)* Fasten your eyes upon the cross and your heart will grow lighter, the sky will be brighter. Jesus can help you find the way. Shake hands with Jesus, give him your foot.

(DENNIS starts to cook. THE FAMILY urges him on.)

Oh, there'll be things in the beginning the Devil will throw in our way. Oh, he'll throw things in our way! But we can smile at Satan's rage – I said smile at Satan's rage and move on. It won't hinder us, no sir. No sir! Praise Jesus, we will never suffer the sting of death. Praise Jesus, He has written our names in the Book of Life!