

“The Bridge”
by Gary Cypher
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There’s a story about two brothers who lived together in harmony for 40 years as they farmed the same land their father had passed down to them. Their houses were opposite of each other, sharing the same big back yard. But something came between them to where they would not speak to each other, and the laughter their families once shared became an eerie silence.

One day a man looking for work came by the younger brother’s house. As he thought, he came up with a project. He told the man that his older brother had bulldozed the river levee and put a creek between them without asking his permission. So he instructed the handyman to take the wood by the barn and construct a high fence so he could not see his brother. The handyman said he had an idea of what to do and went to work.

The younger brother left for a few days to visit his wife’s mother. When he came back he was stunned by what he saw. Instead of a fence, the handyman had built a bridge over the creek...and just as he walked out the back door to view the project, his brother was crossing over the bridge to meet him.

“What a great idea!” the older brother said, smiling. “It was stupid of me to cut this creek between us. Let’s let bygones be bygones and be family once again.” The younger brother kept silent about the bridge not being his idea; he had enough sense to realize this reconciliation was long overdue. They embraced one another and shared a meal between the families like it had been once before.... on the bridge!

When the handyman came by the next day for payment, the younger brother asked him to stay on for some other projects. But he replied, “Sorry, I can’t. I’ve got a lot more bridges to build for other folks!”

Was it Jesus that built the bridge? Jesus is our bridge builder. He has done this kind of project before – He turned a dividing fence between two brothers into a uniting bridge.

In the song “Bridge Over Troubled Water” Paul Simon writes:

- When you're weary, feeling small
- When tears are in your eyes,
- When times get rough
- And friends just can't be found
- When you're down and out,
- When you're on the street
- When evening falls, so hard
- When darkness comes
- And pain is all around

Each of our journeys have brought many, if not all of these experiences into our life.

Paul Simon also states in the song:

- The tears, I will dry them all
- I'm on your side
- I will lay me down
- I will comfort you
- I'll take your part
- I will lay me down

There are peoples' thoughts that support and of which I believe are true, that Jesus is truly the "Bridge":

One person states:

- When you're going through a very dark time and you're emotionally exhausted and alone, a place where no friends or real support can be found.

'In between' living your old life with unhealthy, uncaring people, and wanting to move into a happier, healthier existence and away from those people you love but are sadly incapable of making that change (sometimes everyone we know)... that's where you find the love, strength, belief and faith in yourself that you can make it.

Trusting that there is a "force" that loves you, hears you and can help you find the courage and faith in yourself carries you from the darkness and into the light ~ your light and your dreams. That force is the bridge - call it what you will...It could be God, or love or energy or 'the force!' but it is something real. You are loved and supported even when you are alone and in the dark. For the brave, miracles happen there.

Another states:

- I really think this song is about one man who did lay his life down for us. Jesus... listen to the words. It could be about a friend but with the line "When friends just can't be found" I really think it is mentioning someone else. Jesus died for our sins, he laid down his life for us. he is there always for us, when we are moving right on by. Also in the 2nd verse "I will comfort you. I'll take your part." Jesus took away our sins when he died for us. he took are place up there.

Others state:

- It's about hope and transformation.
- I like to think the "I will lay me down" means that he would physically lay himself down as a bridge to you to help you get over this rough patch of your life. Like, he would sacrifice himself..... it's like we are Christ for each other, we would sacrifice ourselves for a friend.
- Gods hand is in this song..... this is God in our lives
- Sounds like that this is a song that Jesus would have sung
- This song is about someone who has lived a long troubled life who feels like there is no one to turn to

- This song is the heavenly Father talking to you. He loves you and will help you through whatever troubles that fall upon you. Just trust Him, that's all. No matter what you have done.

In our reading today Luke writes in part:

When Jesus stepped ashore, he was met by a demon-possessed man from the town. For a long time this man had not worn clothes or lived in a house, but had lived in the tombs.

When they (the people) came to Jesus, they found the man from whom the demons had gone out, sitting at Jesus' feet, dressed and in his right mind; and they were afraid.

Jesus told the once possessed man to:

“Return home and tell how much God has done for you.”

Paul Simon states in the last verse of the song:

- **Your time has come to shine,**
- **and all your dreams are on their way**
- **See how they shine,**
- **Oh, if you need a friend, I'm sailing right behind**
- **I will ease your mind**

I truly believe that Jesus was the “bridge” that allowed this man that Luke wrote about, to continue on his life's journey and “shine” and not be troubled by his demonic past, and even after Jesus told the man that he couldn't go with him, more than likely assured the man that he would still be with him.

“If you need a friend, I'm sailing right behind”

In Conclusion:

1. We are all created in God's own image, to become a bridge for others to come to Jesus.
2. We don't have to memorize 50 verses of the Bible, or have perfect attendance for a year at church, or be the "perfect" Christian to be a bridge.

It's really pretty simple:

- Care for others (*Christ's love is communicated by our caring*)
- Be a friend (*people that don't know Christ need a friend and who better than somebody who knows of the Lord.*)
- Share with them honestly what Christ has done in your life.

3. Will you decide today, to be that bridge for somebody else to come to Jesus?

“Your time has come to shine,”

Amen