

## *Anthony* *A Beggar Made Fit For a King*

*The Story of Anthony as written by C.E. Wigg. (Bible teacher from Tasmania) . . . Abridged*

If ever there is a lesson to be learnt it is in the story of Anthony, a beggar made fit for a king. Despite all outward appearance here was a man who we would possibly have by-passed without giving him a second glance, possibly looking the other way, but God saw as His own. He may have been dressed in rags of cloth but he was dressed in the righteousness of Christ.

### My Introduction to Anthony

In 1986 I attended some meetings in Bombay where I met Mr. Allan Wilcock. It was suggested to him that he join me as I was traveling to the Northern States, but neither of us knew the wonderful experience we were going to have.

Leaving Bombay and after meetings in Jaipur, we were leaving for Alwar. We loaded our luggage into a cycle ricksha, but we walked to the station. While waiting for the luggage at the railway station I was approached by a beggar who was begging for money. Since there are so many beggars in India I promptly ignored the man. When the luggage came, I gave Rasheed, the Ricksha puller, his money and a Hindi Gideon's New Testament.

While writing Rasheed's name in the New Testament the beggar asked in perfect English, "Do you have one for me?" I replied "surely I have one for you, if you will promise to read it", to which he replied, "O surely I will read it". So I produced another and gave it to him. Then he said something which amazed me. Receiving it he said: "It is very easy to give the Word of God, but very hard to live by it". It was then I woke up. This very poor beggar was saying things that would normally only come from a Christian Believer!

"Are you a Christian believer?" I asked, and he replied "Yes". Again I asked him, "Are you a born again, Christian believer?" and once more he said clearly, "Yes". In a judgmental tone I asked him, "Why are you begging from men? If you are a child of God, then your Heavenly Father is my Heavenly Father, He has promised to supply our needs. When you beg from men you dishonour Him, you say by your very actions, "I have a Heavenly Father, but He does not care for me!" Poor fellow, how my words stung him! He bowed his head in shame and exclaimed, "O I have failed the Lord so badly".

As I write these words, it makes me weep. I was well dressed, I had never known what it was to be hungry. I did not know what this poor man had passed through. How could I be so bold and unfeeling to speak to this poor brother as I did? May God forgive me!

We took our luggage and went to the platform, and the beggar (Anthony) followed. While we talked, Anthony looked on with such an expression of sadness on his face. The poor brother was wearing a flimsy cloth around his waist, a navy colored jumper that was several sizes too big for him over which he wore a kind of shawl to try to keep out the cold, because it was very cold at night.

I asked, "What is your name?" and he replied, "Anthony". This told me that he was from Roman Catholic background (St. Anthony being the 'patron saint of children'). I questioned him as to whether he was trying to fool me when he said that he was a born again believer? He assured me that he did not drink, smoke, gamble or take drugs, and seemed horrified at the very suggestion. I asked him if he was willing to come to Alwar if I bought him a ticket. He was quite willing to come, so a ticket was purchased. When the train reached Alwar we were met by Mr. T. J. Joseph and another brother who had come with their van to meet us.

I then told Mr. Joseph that I had met a beggar and that I wished to try to help him, and asked if it would be acceptable to bring him to the other man's house? Going back along the platform looking for Anthony I found him standing on the station waiting for me.

We reached the home and Allan and I went inside and talked while another brother spoke with Anthony. When he returned he was amazed, telling us that Anthony was a remarkable person; that he could speak several Indian

## *Anthony* *A Beggar Made Fit For a King*

languages fluently, and that he had traveled all over India. Sitting down for breakfast Anthony enjoyed the first real meal that he had for some time. After the meal money was provided for him to go to a barber for a shave and a haircut. He was then taken to a tailor, and Anthony was measured for some pants and a shirt, then a nice long sleeved pullover. Later that day when Anthony put on the clothes he looked a different person altogether.

The following night Anthony gave his testimony, such a story as would bring tears from a stone. He began by singing a song in Hindi that he had written himself, and he accompanied himself by tapping on the pulpit, as though it was a drum. He had a very sweet singing voice.

### Anthony's Life Story

Anthony was born in Goa, to Roman Catholic parents. When he was still a baby the Indians decided to take Goa back from the Portuguese. The war only lasted a couple of days, as the tiny Portuguese battalion was no match for the might of the Indian army. When this happened Anthony's father thought it best for them to leave their native Goa and become refugees, so they went to Ahmedabad in Gujerat State. There they scrounged some materials and built a roadside shack. His father did not enjoy good health, and the trauma of their war experience brought on a heart condition, from which he died soon after.

His death left Anthony's mother a young widow with a baby son (Anthony) but she refused to give up. By one means or another she earned enough to support herself and her son for many years. When he was old enough, she put Anthony in school until he was 9 or 10 years old, then she took him from school and put him with a person so that he could learn a trade. The trade was making light fittings, chandeliers, etc., and Anthony did quite well at it. He would work during the day and attend school at night, during which time he studied to the tenth standard and passed his exams also.

Then tragedy struck once more, and it came in the form of racial riots between the Hindus and the Muslims. Many people lost their lives and large areas of slum dwellings were burnt down. One day Anthony returned home to find that their poor home and possessions were in ashes, and his dear mother had been burned alive.

To use his own words, "When I saw this, I had no more hope in my life, and my mind cracked". For a short time he was placed in a mental institution, but as there was no one to bribe the officials, he was soon turned out to wander like a dog on the streets. He had a little intelligence remaining, and said to himself, "I don't want to live I want to die. It is no use my working any more, then let me beg. If I can get 2 or 3 chapatis (a round flat unleavened cake kind of thing) each day, that is all I need". So he went to Ahmedabad railway station where he begged each day. He would sleep on the bench seats on the platforms, but as he ate anything, and everything, he soon became ill with dysentery, and for weeks passed nothing but blood. He no longer had much strength, and he was literally dying on the railway platform.

Whilst lying there one day a young man came to him, and gave him an invitation to some Gospel-healing meetings that were being held in a park in another part of the city. They were a group of young people from different Western Countries who formed themselves into an evangelistic team, and equipped with tents, and vehicles, etc., would go from place to place holding Gospel meetings. They were a neo-Pentecostal group, and prayed for the sick as well as preaching the Gospel.

Anthony asked some questions, such as what would he hear at the meetings, etc. He was told that he would hear about Jesus Christ, to which he replied, "Jesus Christ!, what can you tell me about Him? I am a Roman Catholic, I have known about Him all my life, but He has never done anything for me!" The young man then suggested he should come and that he may hear things that he had never heard before. After the young man departed Anthony used what little mind that remained to think about the invitation. He reasoned that if he went they may give him some food, perhaps they might pray for him. Though the only prayers that he had ever heard were the formal ones offered in the Roman Catholic Church to Mary, Saints and others, and those prayers had never done anything for him. So with what little strength he had left he dragged himself slowly across the city to where the meetings were being held.

## *Anthony* *A Beggar Made Fit For a King*

When he reached the place, he found that the people were mostly young like himself, and knowing English, he could converse with them. They did not treat him roughly, or cruelly, like many others did. He listened to the message that night, but it meant nothing to him. But at the end, they asked if there were any that were sick and wanted to be healed to come forward.

Anthony was really sick and had experienced much pain and weakness. Though his poor mind was also sick, he had enough sense remaining to know that he would like to be healed, so he went forward also. Several prayed for him with such prayers as he had never heard before. These people spoke to God as though they knew Him, and God did hear and answer their prayers. Anthony was healed, the bleeding ceased, the pain was gone, his appetite returned, and wonder of wonders, his poor mind was healed also, he could now think straight. As these people seemed kind, and did not chase him away, he decided to stay the night there. They even gave him food the next day, and seemed to welcome him as one of themselves.

He listened to the message the following night, and now that his mind was clear, he could follow what the preacher was saying. However, his thoughts were clouded with his previous teachings. He had been taught that there was only one Church, the Roman Catholic Church. There was no salvation except through that Church, and that to obtain forgiveness of ones sins one must go to the priest and confess. He would prescribe the appropriate penance that the sinner must do to obtain pardon and peace. After the meeting one of the team came to him and asked why he did not confess his sins and receive Christ as Savior. Anthony was under conviction, and replied, "Yes I will, I must go to the priest". The team member then asked him, "Why will you go to the priest for he cannot help you. It is Christ who died for you, He only can forgive your sins, why not confess to Him and receive Him as your Savior now?". This thought had never occurred to Anthony before, and he did repent and receive Christ as his own Savior. Such joy as he had never known in his whole sad life now filled his soul. He was now a child of God, he now had a living Savior and a loving Heavenly Father that he could trust and turn to at any time. He never went back to the railway station or to the begging.

Anthony remained with those people and they gave him a Bible and encouraged him to read it. They taught him many things about the Bible, and that he should be baptized by immersion, thereby publicly confessing his faith in the Lord Jesus. He learned quickly, and soon was baptized and joined that team. As he was healthy now and having regular meals, his strength began to return and he found great joy in telling others about his wonderful Savior. When the team left that place he went with them, and during the next couple of years went to several States. He learned to trust his Heavenly Father to supply his needs day by day. He went to jails, hospitals, and other places, giving away Christian Scriptures and literature, and witnessing for the Lord Jesus. To him this was the very greatest life, but he had one regret, 'if only he had known sooner', 'if only his dear mother had heard!'

These were wonderful years, but dark clouds were brewing. Due to circumstances all the foreign workers had to leave and the work ended. To Anthony all this was very sad. After praying about the matter he decided to take up his trade once again. He went to Faridabad and purchased some tools and supplies, then returned to Madras where he built himself a roadside shack and began to make chandeliers once again. Once he had finished one he would sell it around the city until he sold it, then he would make another.

While thus engaged he was once met by a reporter from the Doodarshan (the Indian State Television Organization). This reporter was fascinated by Anthony's story and by the fact that Anthony was able to speak many languages, so he decided to do a television program on him. On this program he sang some songs that he had written and gave his testimony. He was doing quite well, however, greater trouble was coming. He had built his shack in a low-lying place and in November of that year the floods came to Madras. The floods swept away all his meager possessions, tools, supplies, etc., and left him with only the clothes that he was wearing and Rs. 800/- in his pocket. This was a great blow to him but he decided to start again. He returned to Delhi, from where he would go to Faridabad. He enjoyed the train trip with a 'bed' to sleep on, however, the train stopped at Hazerat Nizamudin, just outside of Delhi at 3 AM in the morning, and from there proceeded very slowly to Delhi. A gang of thieves entered the carriage where Anthony was sleeping. Being armed, they proceeded to steal everything. They stole Anthony's clothes, money, everything, leaving him only in his underwear. They even stole his New Testament, but when they saw what it was they threw it back to him. Poor Anthony, this was just too much! What could he do now? The only thing left for him was to beg. He begged on Delhi station where he collected

*Anthony*  
*A Beggar Made Fit For a King*

three rupees. With this money he bought two lungis (shawls) from a used clothing stall. (He was wearing these when I met him). He had decided that as Jaipur was a tourist center, he would go there and beg.

At Jaipur he had a miserable time. Because it was a tourist place, the railway authorities did not want the platforms to be over-run with beggars and thus spoil the public image, so when a train was expected the beggars were driven outside. Anthony had reached Jaipur four days before I met him, and he had just been driven from the station when I met him outside. What a remarkable example of the accurateness of God's timing! What a wonderful God we serve, who did not protect His child from trouble, but brought him through it all in such a wonderful way! Though He has billions to provide for, and a huge world to sustain, yet He kept his eye on that poor orphan from Goa.

When Anthony told his story there was not a dry eye in that meeting, the hearts of all had been touched. Mr. Joseph gave him a job as a singing teacher in his school. I arranged for him to come to Delhi on Easter Monday when we would go together to Dehra Dun, and other places. Anthony was waiting for us when we went to the station to take the train to Dehra Dun.

When we were at Herbertpur Christian Hospital we stayed in the guest rooms there. When retiring on the first night, Anthony was going to get into the bed fully clothed. I gently explained to him that we do not do that, as it might spoil our clothes (to say nothing of the beautiful white sheets). It was only then that I began to realize that he had never slept in a bed before, and that he had always slept in his clothes, wherever he was.

I proved this dear brother to be absolutely faithful, and fully reliable. We went to a place called Kulhal, where we stayed with Mr. A.P. Ram and his family. The children took Anthony to their hearts just as if he was their own brother. One morning as they were going to school the little ones came and gave him a hug and a kiss, and said "Goodbye brother Anthony". Soon afterwards I saw him weeping and asked him what was wrong. He replied that he had never known love like this in his whole life, and that it was overwhelming, too much for him.

We parted soon afterwards, he went back to Alwar, but he did not stay there for very long but took to the road again. Not now to beg, but to spread the precious gospel of Christ. What a life, from being a beggar to being the child of the king.

Unworthy am I of the grace that He gave,  
Unworthy to hold to His hand;  
Amazed that a King would reach down to a slave,  
This love I cannot understand.

*Chorus*

*Unworthy, unworthy, a beggar;  
In bondage and alone;  
But He made me worthy and now by His grace,  
His mercy has made me His own.*

My sorrow and sickness laid stripes on His back,  
My sins caused the blood that was shed;  
My faults and my failures have woven a crown  
Of thorns, that He wore on His head.

Unworthy am I of the glory to come,  
Unworthy with angels to sing;  
I thrill just to know that He loved me so much,  
A pauper, I walk with the King.