

LETTERS FROM GRANDPA
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Dearest grandchild,

Today's letter will deal with the command of Christ to **"Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be the sons of your Father in heaven"** (Matt. 5:44-45). Our story begins April 18, 1942. It was on this day that sixteen B 25 bombers took off from the USS Hornet in the famous Doolittle raid on Japan. Corporal Jacob DeShazer was the bombardier on plane #16. That plane had some serious problems in launching. Pushing it back for maximum length of runway the ship lurched and the plane almost fell into the sea. While sailors rushed to save the plane one man stumbled into the propeller and lost an arm. DeShazer helped carry the man to safety. When DeShazer finally got into position in the nose of the airplane he discovered a jagged hole about a foot in diameter in the plastic window in front of him. The plane was already speeding forward for the take off and nothing could be done about it. In war being comfortable is often not an option.

DeShazer's target was Nagoya, about 300 miles south of Tokyo. He successfully dropped their bombs on oil storage tanks from an altitude of only 500 feet. They had already been in the air for 13 hours and had only enough fuel for one more hour of flight so they headed for China. Darkness and fog prevented them from landing and the crew bailed out. DeShazer landed hard and broke some ribs. After walking for several miles he was arrested with the other crew members and interrogated by Japanese soldiers. Then they were flown to Japan for further interrogation and torture.

Of the sixteen planes only two came down in Japanese occupied territory. Eight American airmen were taken captive and sent to Tokyo for trial. After 70 days of interrogation and torture, all eight Americans were condemned to death. Due to their starvation and torture they were almost dead anyway. The emperor, however, intervened and decided to execute only three. The other five, which included DeShazer, were given life sentences. It was in this atmosphere of solitary confinement, starvation and torture that Jacob DeShazer developed a pathological hatred for the Japanese. They had executed three of his buddies before a firing squad, and another had died of starvation.

It was many months later, sometime in May of 1944, that DeShazer was given a Bible to read. This precious book was being passed from one prisoner to the other. Each prisoner was allotted only 3 weeks to have the Bible. When DeShazer's turn came he read the Bible every moment he had enough light. Though the light was dim and the print was small he read the Bible through six times. In the isolation of his prison cell the Word of God came alive and transformed his life. On June 8, 1944 the words of Romans 10:9 stood out boldly before his eyes: **"If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved"** On that day he gave his heart to Christ and became a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17). Miraculously God gave him new spiritual eyes and he began to see his tormentors as Jesus saw them. In fact, he actually came to love the men who had starved, beaten, and tortured him and his companions.

DeShazer was in prison for 40 months. When the war ended he was set free on Aug. 20, 1945. The fact that four of the Doolittle raiders were still alive was amazing news, but no one could have been more happy than DeShazer's godly mother in Salem, Oregon. After 40 months of constant prayer she finally had living proof that her prayers had been answered. DeShazer returned to the states, got married, went to Bible College, and on Dec. 14, 1948 he returned to Japan as a missionary. The Associated Press estimates that he had 30,000 converts to Christ during his first year of preaching in

Japan. By his own count 4,000 confessed Christ and gave evidence of a transformed life in only one 15 day campaign. A pamphlet giving DeShazer's testimony resulted in 30 million copies printed in more than 20 languages.

Even more incredible, one of these pamphlets found its way into the hands of Mitsuo Fuchida. Fuchida was Japan's top pilot who led the infamous raid on Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941. Fuchida was impressed by the power that turned DeShazer's hatred into love. Thus, in spite of his Buddhist heritage, he bought a Bible. The same Word of God that transformed the life of Jacob DeShazer, did the same for Mitsuo Fuchida. On April 14, 1950 he too gave his heart to Christ. Then, as an obedient servant, he also traveled the Orient preaching the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Fuchida said: *"I would give anything to retract my actions of twenty-nine years ago at Pearl Harbor, but it is impossible. Instead, I now work at striking the death-blow to the basic hatred which infests the human heart and causes such tragedies. And that hatred cannot be uprooted without assistance from Jesus Christ. He is the only One Who was powerful enough to change my life and inspire it with His thoughts. He was the only answer to Jake DeShazer's tormented life. He is the only answer for young people today"* Signed Mitsuo Fuchida - 1970.

Fuchida died May 30, 1976 at the age of 73. After 30 years of preaching in Japan DeShazer returned to the states and died on March 15, 2008 at the age of 95. Both of these great warriors had put into practice the teaching of Jesus about loving your enemies. Both are now with Jesus in the land of everlasting love.

Remember! **"Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails!"** (1 Cor. 13:4-8).

I love you,

Grandpa Boyce