

A Matter of Time

By Michael Leathers

CAST: 3 males

Brother Wright: Minister, mid to late 30s, eager to cheer up a friend.

Riley: Owner of Riley's Diner, 50s, gruff exterior with a soft heart.

Larry: Helpful deacon, early 40s, who's become unexplainably depressed.

RUN TIME: 5 minutes

PROPS

- Wall clock
- Plastic cup with lid
- Muffin

STORY

Brother Wright is in a great mood when he enters Riley's Diner. He discovers one of his church deacons there, seemingly despondent. Convinced he can cheer up Larry, Brother Wright soon learns that sometimes it's easier for people to bring you down to their level.

THEMES

Defeatism. Vision. Hopelessness. Pessimism.

A Matter of Time

(We're in a diner. Despondent, LARRY is sitting at a table and muttering something, but we can't hear the words. The wall clock from the restaurant is on his table. RILEY is working behind a counter or cleaning a nearby table. BROTHER WRIGHT enters)

BROTHER WRIGHT

Good morning, Riley. Isn't this a glorious day?

RILEY

Yeah, beautiful. What'll yuh have?

BROTHER WRIGHT

One of your awesome muffins and a large orange juice to go. This is the day the Lord has made, and I don't want to waste a minute of it.

RILEY

Since you're so chipper, how would yuh like to get yer order on the house?

BROTHER WRIGHT

That would be a blessing.

RILEY

Yuh gotta do one thing for me. That guy belongs to you, doesn't he?

BROTHER WRIGHT

(Sees LARRY, still muttering inaudibly)

Why, yes. That's Larry from church. My, he looks like he's in a slump.

RILEY

Tell me about it. He was fine when he came in earlier. Larry's always spoutin' off about how he can fix anything, so I asked him if he could repair my busted clock. Next thing I know, he's sittin' there like a toad, mumblin' and creepin' out my other customers. I've been tryin' to talk him out of it but it's no good. Cheer him up or somethin', will yuh?

BROTHER WRIGHT

Leave it to me, my friend. I'll have him smiling again in no time.

(BROTHER WRIGHT crosses to LARRY. RILEY exits)

BROTHER WRIGHT (cont'd)

Brother, good morning.

LARRY

(Despondent)

Hello, Brother Wright.

BROTHER WRIGHT

Why such a long face? It's a beautiful day filled with opportunities to serve the Lord.

LARRY

That's what I was tryin' to do. I was gonna repair Riley's clock. He lives by it so he don't hafta wear his watch when he's cooking. I don't wear one neither when I'm workin'.

BROTHER WRIGHT

Helping out someone like this is a powerful witness. Larry, as skilled as you are at fixing things up around the church, this is a natural use of your gifts. Why would this make you so gloomy?

LARRY

Because it's impossible to fix this clock. It can't be done.

BROTHER WRIGHT

Never say something can't be done. Remember, all things are possible through Christ who strengthens us.

LARRY

Jesus didn't know about this clock.

(RILEY enters with a plastic-foam cup of orange juice and gives it to BROTHER WRIGHT)

RILEY

Just keepin' up my end of the bargain. How's it goin'?

BROTHER WRIGHT

Victory is nearly assured, thank you.

(RILEY exits)

BROTHER WRIGHT

Larry, remember a few Sundays back when Pastor spoke about the importance of establishing goals?

LARRY

Yeah?

BROTHER WRIGHT

Well, you can't give up so easily. Set your vision. See yourself reaching the goal. Take one step at a time. Before you know it, you will have completed the task.

LARRY

That's exactly what I did, but it don't work in the real world.

BROTHER WRIGHT

Nonsense. Let me help. Tell me what you did first.

LARRY

First thing was to get the back off this clock.

END OF SAMPLE

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