

### WHERE IS YOUR TREASURE?

We have all kinds of treasures. We have to be careful, though, or our treasures will steal our hearts. Just ask Chuck Rogers.

Basketball is big in Indiana. Everyone wants to play basketball, especially if you are tall and have a natural ability to handle the ball - like Chuck Rogers. He loved to play and he was good.

Something happened, however, when Chuck was in the sixth grade. Right after school began, Chuck's father beat up his mother in front of Chuck and his two sisters. Later in September, his father attacked Chuck's younger sister, beating her so badly she was hospitalized for ten days. On October 3rd, Chuck's mother said she could take it no longer and filed for a divorce.

Within three months the family went from living in a rich suburb to an apartment in the low-rent district of Fort Wayne. Making ends meet became a family affair. Chuck's older sister took an afternoon job at the drug store. His younger sister kept house while his mother worked two jobs. Chuck got a job cleaning the shop at the Chevrolet dealership. Each Saturday the family pooled their earnings and hoped they had enough to pay their bills.

During this time there was little time for basketball. Chuck couldn't play on the school team because he had to work. One Saturday, some guys from the neighborhood were playing in the park. A coach from the local Boys Club team watched the game and afterwards talked to Chuck about playing on the team. Since the team practiced at night, Chuck could do it.

From the moment Chuck joined the Hillsdale Boys Club team, no other team in town had a prayer. Hillsdale qualified for the state play-offs. Easily winning their first two games, they made it to the championship game against the number one team from Indianapolis.

More than 8,000 spectators packed the Civic Center for the game, including twelve college scouts. People came from all over to see Chuck Rogers, the 6'8" kid from Ft. Wayne. And Chuck did not disappoint them. By half-time he had scored 24 points and Hillsdale was beating the former champions.

There is something, though, you need to know. The team provided shirts and shorts - no socks, no shoes, no underwear. Chuck had to improvise by putting on a pair of boxer shorts and tying the legs up with shoe strings on each side because he couldn't afford anything else.

If Chuck was hot in the first half, he was blazing in the second half. The crowd cheered, they chanted his name. With three minutes to play in the third period, Hillsdale was leading by 18 points. Then came a moment which changed Chuck's life. While standing at the free throw line, he heard a ripple of laughter in the stands. He looked at the crowd and realized they were laughing at him. The string holding his boxer shorts had broken, and slipping out from under the leg of his uniform were his red and white polka dot undershorts. In total humiliation, Chuck dropped the basketball and went to the dressing room. With every step he said, "I will never be poor again." He got dressed and hitchhiked home to Ft. Wayne.

That moment shaped his life for the next thirty years. He withdrew from everything, including basketball and studied hard. He earned a scholarship to Texas A & M. and after completing a master's degree in engineering, he took a job in Indianapolis.

At age 34 he was made a full partner in the firm. He now had money, he had position, he had family, and he had the constant fear that it all could end at any moment. Years passed and the important thing to Chuck was making money so that he would never be poor again.

Then something dramatic happened to Chuck. He and his wife got involved in a Methodist Church. The church was having a capital stewardship program and the pastor asked Chuck to give his personal testimony. Chuck told of his father leaving and what it had done to his family. He told of his mother's determination to hold the family together. He spoke of afternoon jobs and late night talks about money. He told about that championship game on February 11, 1955. And he told about those six words which had shaped his life, "I will never be poor again."

He said, "From the moment I walked out of the Civic Center I dedicated my life to getting as much as I could. For 30 years I have had that focus. I am here tonight to inform you that it has been a life of hell. My experience tells me that you can never get enough to satisfy that need."

Chuck continued, "Two weeks ago I made a life-changing discovery. I discovered that all of the things that I have spent my life gathering are not mine at all. No matter how I tried, I have never owned them. In reality, they owned me. After making that discovery, Ann and I got down on our knees and committed everything back to God.

"Tonight I stand before you to tell you that for the first time in all these years, I feel free. We have nothing to give. We really own nothing. But of what God has entrusted to our keeping we are giving a gift of \$450,000 to this program. That amount represents our total liquid assets. We have nothing else but the assurance that we will never be poor again."

Jesus said, *"Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions, and give alms. Make purses for yourselves that do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."*

It is true, as Jesus said, *"I came so that you may have life, and have it abundantly."*