



table talk

4/12/26

“Thank You, Brother Elliott”

He scared me the first time I saw him. He was Dean of Men at Southeastern Bible College. Robert Elliott had one of those deep “God-voices” that made him seem more stern than he really was. He taught Assemblies of God Doctrine and the Evangelistic Work of the Church. Over the next four years, I learned to love him deeply.

My fear of him melted away when I approached him after his lecture concerning the Methodist Circuit Riders of John Wesley’s era. I was weeping almost uncontrollably as I tried to thank him for teaching me about those great itinerant preachers in early America and England. I was utterly broken, trembling slightly under the power of the Holy Spirit.

I could only speak a few words at a time. Excuse me, but both tears and snot flowed freely as I tried to communicate. He listened patiently, asked my name (I was a first semester freshman), and then laid his hands on my shoulders and head and prayed for me with tears of his own. He became a good mentor during my college years.

One summer years later, my friend Terry Wasden and I arrived in Springfield, Missouri to begin our Seminary experience. We had no place to live, very little money to pay for food, and no job. Brother Elliott was there that summer working on another degree. We ran into him on campus within hours, and he housed and fed us while we found our own place to live and got jobs that would allow us to become seminarians as well.

While Ramona and I were pastoring in Alabama, he came

and preached for us. I still cherish every moment.

He is in Heaven now, and he is missed by thousands of others like me who were so honored to be his students.

The thing about Brother Elliott, though, was not his teaching, counseling, or preaching. It was his tenderness to the presence of the Lord. The most important thing to him was God's Presence.

Every class with Brother Elliott began with worship and an invitation for Holy Spirit to come among us. There were times we could not proceed with class as the Presence of God would interrupt us.

A few critics protested by saying "I didn't pay tuition to have church service. I paid to be taught!"

A few others who didn't enjoy classes anyway welcomed the interruption, especially if it was an exam day.

However, most of us knew we'd get the lecture material one way or another. And exams would certainly be rescheduled. Brother Elliott was trying to help us understand that if the move in the classroom was of God, then we would learn something no lecture could teach. His belief was seared into my mind: "God can do more in five minutes for you than I can do for you in five years."

During that first year, he taught us a song I'd never heard before. It has become one of my dearest worship songs. I'm sure you can find it on YouTube. This is only the chorus:

"Shut In with God"

***"Shut in with God, In a Secret Place
There in the Spirit, Beholding His Face!
Gaining New Power to Run in the Race
Oh, I love to be Shut in With God!"***

Thank you, Brother Elliott, for helping me understand how special it is to be "Shut in with God" in a secret place of prayer, worship, and the Word.

I love you,
Pastor Stephen