

# The Man Who Left His Shop

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Giving up the job shop was very hard for him. It had been in the family for years and years.

In those days, having your own job shop in a small town in the country was a blessing. It wouldn't make him rich, but he wouldn't starve either. Life was better here than in the big city, where there was so much political trouble and social unrest.

He had learned the trade from his "pop," working side by side with him in the shop. Pop was a good teacher, thorough, exacting but patient. Taking over the business when Pop was gone was natural for the young man.

The hours were long at times but his customers had come to rely on his prompt delivery and high quality. He enjoyed the work. The physical activity was often vigorous but welcome for a healthy man in his late twenties. He liked to be near his tools and he kept them in top condition. Yet there was often time to think.

When he was turning a workpiece, or sharpening a tool at the grinding stone, his eye watched the work, but his mind was in motion. The same ideas came to him over and over. Stories and ways to explain things. Such a powerful message. It had been building in him since he was a little boy.

His folks were the religious type. Every holy day was not only observed, but also celebrated in a genuine and earnest fashion. Tradition and customs were cherished. Out in the shop, no swearing or rudeness was tolerated but it wasn't a dreary place. There was laughter.

Helpers liked it there and were treated fairly. Why would anyone want to leave this behind?

His poor mom! Losing her husband had been tough. And now her son, her first born, wanted to start a new career. Having the shop almost next door had been a source of comfort. A helping hand or a gentle conversation was never far away. All this was going to change.

But she knew he had to do what he had to do. Although the shop years were at an end, they had been good years, busy years. Remembering them would bring joy and consolation.

History, however, would forget those years, but not the next three. For the man, these years would be ones of wonder and fame, temptation and turmoil. They, too, would have an end, but in betrayal, torture and death. The ultimate aftermath remains a compelling issue to this day. Each year, this very month in fact, the climactic story of the man who left his shop and fulfilled a mission is retold all over the world.

