

Gas Stations

Papa wheeled our old station wagon into the Pure gas station at the end of gasoline alley. We are there because they have a mechanic. We're going to be here for about an hour, so we bought two cokes and some crackers and climbed up on the big rock out front. As a nine year old boy, I felt like an explorer standing on that big rock with my dad, the same feeling I have when I sit close to him in the front seat of the car.

From our perch we can see all the gas stations up and down the street, and I asked about the strange names on the signs. Papa is a seminary professor and he always has a box of books in the car. He told me to stay put, and soon he came back with an eighty pound dictionary that could stop a speeding bullet. He handed me a paper and pencil. This is seeming way too much like homework.

The closest gas station is named Firestone. Papa turned to the F's and read out loud the meaning: A flint used to strike a fire. The G's were next, so he looked up Gulf: A deep, wide chasm; an abyss. A wide gap, as in understanding.

I fumbled to find the S's as Papa held the big book. There it was, Sinclair: American meaning: Prayer; French meaning; A clear sign; From St. Clair; Scottish meaning: Prayer. Next in the S's was Shell: A protective covering of an organism that lives and goes through hardships and challenges in the ocean. The covering adapts to changes to survive in the harshest of environments.

The air woosh of half the dictionary falling back to the C's could have wiped out every mosquito in town. Papa's fingers found the word Chevron: A number of arrows that in most cases represents the ranking of a particular member of the military or other armed forces. Each arrow itself is called a chevron.

Conoco is a Spanish word meaning to meet or to know. As we were at the Pure station, we looked up Pure: Adjective, not mixed with any other matter, free of dirt, pollutants, free from anything of a different, inferior, or contaminating kind; free from extraneous matter: pure gold; pure water.

Well, said Papa; "You have my Sunday School lesson for this week." "How's that I asked"? Well, we come to these stations for fuel to fill the car, and just like when we read our Bible, God fills us with Himself. The Firestone starts a fire, like the fire we have living in us, the Holy Spirit. The Shell is a protective covering for our bodies, similar to the Armor of God that we talked about last week in Sunday School. A deep, wide chasm is a Gulf, an abyss, like the one in Luke 16:19-31, in which Jesus was teaching about the reality of heaven and hell.

Sinclair means prayer in American English and in the Scottish language. To the French it means a clear sign. We talk to God through prayer, and He answers us. In Conoco, we meet with Jesus and know Him better through our Bible and prayer. We are the arrows in a Chevron, a number of arrows representing the ranking of a particular member of the military or other armed forces. Well, we are the Arrows of Ephraim, and we are soldiers in God's Army.

And last, Pure, which is how God is, and is a picture of how we ought to live: free of the dirt and pollution of the world. When we confess our sins and repent, we are like pure gold, and the pure water of God flows to us from His throne.

Son, we feel safe standing up high on this big rock, but Psalm 121:1-3 tells us that Jesus is our rock and salvation; He is our Mighty Rock. Say, you will have a big jump on your friends in Sunday School this week. If you think about these things and ask Jesus to help you, how about you talking to your class this Sunday about what you learned about gas stations?" "Wow Papa, the Lord sure does work in mysterious ways. I can't wait to show Mom. Do I have to take along this eighty pound dictionary?"