
THE ICE POND

Michael Maw (January 9, 2017)

Sometime between three and four in the morning on Monday, January 9, 2017 I was suddenly awakened from sleep at my home. As I lay in bed the following scenes were presented to me.

White was all around me. The sky was bright and sunny, and on every side of me lay gentle sloping hills covered in glistening snow. I do not recall seeing a single tree or shrub of any kind – just a smooth layer of snow covering everything in sight. In the middle of the place was a large pond shaped somewhat like the number eight, with a large section at one end and a smaller circular section at its head. The pond was covered in a layer of ice, as white as everything that surrounded it.

As I stood there admiring the scene, my attention was directed to the top of one of the hills where I saw three figures appear. They slowly descended the hill towards the pond, and as they drew closer I noticed that one was an older man, strong and noble. Next to him was a handsome young man, and finally a young boy who looked to be no more than 6 or 7 years old perhaps. All were clothed in winter clothes to keep them warm, and each one carried a pair of ice skates.

When they reached the bottom of the hill, I saw the young boy sit down in the snow at the water's edge and eagerly begin to strap on his skates. The other two leaned over him to help, and I heard them say these words:

“Son, listen carefully now to what we say. You may skate on this smaller section of the pond, but do not go over to the larger area. It is dangerous to skate over there, and if you do you will die. You may skate to your heart's content on this side however. Do you understand?”

The boy nodded and assured them he would stay within the safe area. The older man then stood up and said, “Just beyond that hill is a small shack where they sell hot drinks. Let's go over and get something to drink so that we may all be warm. Son, we will return with a drink for you and then we will join you on the ice.”

The young boy smiled and stepped onto the ice, and the men smiled at him and turned to leave. As they walked away I watched as the young boy began to skate on the ice, at first timidly but then with more and more confidence. He seemed to be having a great deal of fun gliding back and forth, enjoying himself immensely.

Suddenly, he stopped and his head turned quickly to look towards the top of the hill at the base of the larger pond. I turned my head also to see what had startled him. There appeared a gang of teenage boys, descending rapidly down the hill towards the pond. They were a wild bunch – yelling, shouting and pushing

each other into the snow as they went. In each of their hands was a hockey stick, and flung over their shoulders were skates.

When they reached the base of the hill, they stopped and proceeded to strap on their skates, still making a great deal of noise. Then one of them stood up and threw a hockey puck onto the ice. It slid over the pond, and with a yell the crew of boys leapt to their feet and scrambled after it as quickly as they could.

The young boy at the other end of the pond watched all this with wide eyes. As the other boys began their game of hockey, he slowly inched ever closer to the edge of the safe side of the pond. At last he stopped at the very edge, and stood silently upon his skates like a frozen statue entranced by the scene.

After a short time, one of the teenage boys, who appeared to be the ringleader, took notice of the young boy and left the game to skate over to him. On his way he picked up an extra hockey stick, and soon stopped only a few feet away.

“We need an extra player,” he said. “How would you like to join our game?” He held out the stick to the young boy, who gazed at it pensively and then looked up at the teenage boy.

“I’m afraid I can’t,” said the younger boy. “My father says it’s not safe to skate over there. I’m only allowed to skate on this side of the pond.”

At this, the teenage boy sneered and chuckled. “That’s nonsense,” he exclaimed. “Do you see all of us skating over here? We’re perfectly safe.” His eyes squinted narrowly and he looked down at the boy. “Your father doesn’t know what he’s talking about.”

The young boy looked over at the other boys skating back and forth across the pond. Oh, how they looked like they were having such fun! And what the older boy said seemed to be true – not one of them appeared to be in any danger. I could see him struggling to decide what to do.

“Come on!” shouted the ringleader. “Here’s your stick. Take it and let’s go play!” The young boy suddenly reached out his arm and grabbed the stick, pulling it towards him. The older boy smiled slyly, and then turned to skate off back towards the game. The younger boy held the stick with both hands and raised it up close to his chest, looking at it carefully. Then he looked up, and pushed himself with one foot onto the edge of the larger pond. As he crossed that invisible line, a certain thrill seemed to come over him that animated his whole being. He abruptly dashed off on his skates towards the gang of boys playing at the other end.

For a short while I watched them play together, until one of the boys slapped the puck rapidly across the ice and it slid past the young boy over to an area of the pond that no one had yet skated on. The young boy turned to race after it, as the other boys shouted after him. However, as he got closer to the puck I noticed that all the other players stopped skating and stood silently upon the ice.

The young boy was only about six feet away when suddenly there was a terrific crack and the sound of gushing water. I looked with horror as the ice opened up beneath the boy and he descended down into the cold, dark waters below. He let out a terrifying scream as the freezing cold enveloped his body and his head descended beneath the water. A second later, his head appeared again and he thrust his arms out of the

water, thrashing about wildly in an attempt to grab on to something. But the ice around him was too slippery, and he could not get a grip on the edges.

I looked back over to the other boys, thinking that they would surely rush to his aid. But I was shocked to see that not one of them moved an inch. They stood as they had been the whole time, motionless, and with faces almost like stone – watching him intently. The young boy cried out for help but they gave no response, and none would help him.

All of a sudden I saw their heads turn abruptly to the left, all in unison, and their eyes widened. I turned and looked towards the top of the hill at the other end of the pond. The two men had returned – the father and his eldest son. From their vantage point, they saw the gravity of the situation and both shouted out the young boy's name. Immediately, they threw down the hot drinks in their hands and began running down the hill towards the scene.

I turned back to see the teenage boys on the ice. Their faces were now filled with a look of terror, and the ringleader yelled out, "Let's get out of here!" The whole gang rapidly skated to the end of the pond and threw down their hockey sticks. Without even taking off their skates, they fearfully dashed up the hill as if chased by a roaring lion.

When the father and the son reached the edge of the ice, I saw the son do something very unexpected. With incredible speed, he began stripping off his clothing until all that remained on his body was his underwear. The father stood by as he did this, and did not step onto the ice, but his eyes were fixed on his younger son struggling in the pond. The eldest son then looked at his father, and their eyes locked.

"He will need warm clothes when I get him out of the water," he stated quickly, as he pointed to the pile of clothes now laying at their feet on the soft snow.

Without a second thought, he turned and dashed across the slippery ice towards the young boy, who was now so paralyzed with cold, and dragged down by his drenched clothing, that he began to descend beneath the dark waters. The eldest son rapidly approached the jagged hole in the ice, which had become much larger from the young boy's struggling, and he leapt up and into the frigid water with a great splash.

For an awful moment, there was dreadful silence across the pond as the father looked on with great concern. Then the son suddenly emerged from the depths with his younger brother in his arms. With all his might, he pushed the young boy out of the water and onto the ice and then he shoved him as hard as he could. The boy's limp body slid across the ice but stopped midway between the father and the eldest son.

The father then reached down and picked up one of the hockey sticks left behind by the gang of teenagers. With his feet still on the snow at the edge of the pond, he knelt and then laid himself down on the ice, stretching his long body across the pond. He reached out his strong arm, placing it beyond his head, with the stick in his hand. I saw him use the slight hook at the end of the hockey stick, to grab hold of the young boy's drenched clothing. And then, with a great tug he began dragging him across the pond towards him. At last he was near enough, and the father grabbed hold of him and quickly moved him to the edge of the pond.

I could tell the boy was in a near fatal condition. If he did not receive immediate help, he would die. The father seemed to know this, and speedily set to work removing the soaking wet clothes from off the young child. At last he was freed from them, and the father opened his coat and grabbed the young boy with both arms, hugging him tightly against his chest.

At this moment, my attention turned again to the eldest son, who still was in the water. He had been struggling with all his energy to free himself from the cold clutches of that dark, watery pit. But despite all his efforts the hole around him only grew larger, and he could not pull himself up onto the ice. The freezing temperature stung his naked body until he began to feel numb, and his movements gradually reduced as the cold paralyzed his muscles and sapped his strength.

And then I heard him cry out, a cry that I will never forget. So loud and horrible was the cry, that it seemed to echo across the hills and into the very bedroom where I lay.

“Father! Father! Why have you forsaken me?”

I looked and saw the father’s face. His back was turned away from the eldest son, as he clutched the young child in his arms. I looked into his eyes and saw streams of tears descending on his cheeks, and incredible sorrow and pain, which no pen can portray, filled his face. At last I understood: he could not save both. If he left the young child to save his eldest son, the child would die. But if he stayed with the child, his eldest son would perish in the icy waters. *Someone must die that day.*

This was the last thing I saw, and then the scene ended. I lay in bed with tears in my eyes, staring into the darkness. And then a voice spoke: “Tell this story to the children.” I recognized that voice, and replied, “Yes, Lord, I will do as you ask.” I kept my promise, and first told these things as a Children’s Story at my local church on April 22, 2017.

The experience I had that night revealed to me in the most distinct manner why the Father sent His Son to die for our sins. Many ask, “What kind of God would first require the brutal death of His one and only Son before He would be willing to forgive us?” But such do not fully understand the horrible nature of sin and its awful consequences. God cannot change, and His holy law – which is as eternal as Himself – also cannot be altered in any way. The sure result of even a single act of disobedience to the divine precepts will result in eternal death, every time, without failure. This is something beyond even the control of our Heavenly Father. He was forced to make a most difficult choice – sacrifice His Son, or lose us for eternity.

I am in awe when I think of the wondrous love of God. It is without comparison. “What kind of God?” the question is asked. I will tell you – a God more unimaginable, more loving, more just, and yet more merciful than any person I have ever known. He is the treasure of Heaven. He is our prize.

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