



Tough as nails

David Foong from the Brisbane network recounts his last moments with Des, a tough and well respected mine manager.

I have a friend in Mackay whom I've known for about 10 years during my time working at the coal mines in North Queensland. A few months ago, he called to say he has been diagnosed with inoperable lung cancer.

Des was a well known mine manager and was a "tough as nails" sort of bloke who does not take things lying down. So in his usual manner, he said he was going to be positive and determined to fight it.

I sent him a card and a Gideon bible. When I called later, he said he had found the Psalms very comforting. That really encouraged me to pray more earnestly for his salvation.

In July, I found out that the doctor has asked his family to gather around him as he has only 2 more weeks to live. I felt very concerned that he must know God's salvation plan. I thought of 2 options: 1) to speak to him on the phone 2) to ask a Gideon from Mackay to go see him.

As I prayed on the following morning, a thought crossed my mind that I should go see him in Mackay. When I discussed the options with Grace, she said I should go see him personally. That was the confirmation I needed. So I booked the flights for the next day.

During the flight I prayed that there will be no other visitors so I could speak with him alone. As I was driving from the airport I began to feel very hungry (pretty unusual as it was only 10.30am). A small voice was telling me to stop and have something to eat. But I was too anxious and kept driving. When I arrived at the house, there was a mine vehicle parked outside. I knew straightaway that Des had visitors with him, so off I went to a nearby bakery to buy that snack!

When I returned later, there were 2 senior mine managers bidding farewell at the door. I was overjoyed that the Lord answered my prayer and had pre-arranged everything for me to share the Gospel with Des at this specific time.

As I sat next to Des, I asked if he has any particular kind of spiritual beliefs. As soon as he started talking, he broke down and cried. He said although he is not religious, he knows the reason he has done well in life is because his wife has said little prayers for him. I then asked "To you, who is Jesus Christ?" Des answered, "He is from the Father".

Although he was in excruciating pain, he still has very sharp mind. He knew I was asking him questions so I can tell him the answers. So he stopped me and asked "David, What do I have to



do now?" I pulled out the Gideon Testament and turned to the back page which has the plan of salvation set out clearly and read aloud with him.

Des was willing to invite Him into his heart. So I asked him to repeat the sinner's prayer with me.

Praise God for Des salvation that day. He passed away 3 weeks after he made his decision for Christ.

David Foong, August 2007