

Exact change...

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ever to reach this bridge and not have the exact change. What have others done? What am I going to do when I get to the gate and I can't go any further?" I began to feel and look over the rental car for change between the car seats or in the glove compartment. No luck.

So after about 10 minutes of agonizing I reached the gate. No change. No attendant. No hope as far as I could determine. Before you laugh at what I did I ask you what would you do? Several ideas—not all legal or honest—went through my mind as the cars honked behind me.

I could: 1. Burst through the gate a la Burt Reynolds and ask forgiveness later. 2. Get out of the car, go hit the gate, throw my hands up in the air, look at the cars behind me and yell, "Oh, this is great! The stupid gate is broken." Or 3. Get out of the car and start going down the line behind me—a very embarrassing experience indeed, searching for someone who could give change for a dollar: Three quarters, two dimes and a nickel you know.

Well, quickly I decided to go with embarrassment over dishonesty or illegality. I went ahead with idea number three.

Expecting much verbal abuse, I got out of my car, and to the first car behind me I went.

"Sir, do you have change for a dollar?" I asked. The fellow didn't answer but rather pointed to an attendant—who could have been an angel as far as I was concerned—making his way down to my car from out of nowhere.

As I went toward him I began to explain that I was not from the area when he interrupted, "What's the matter? Can't you read?" in reference to the "exact change" sign.

"Yes, I can read," I said. "But I'm from Mississippi and this bridge caught me by surprise." When he heard my accent I knew I was doing nothing to enhance the image of my state. (Come to think of it, his question didn't do much to enhance the image of his area either.) Anyway he quickly took my dollar, opened the gate and I was on my way.

What a relief. What a sense of freedom.

Spiritually speaking, the Bible explains that the "exact change" for crossing the bridge into heaven is faith in Jesus Christ. Without Him we have no hope. No chance of life abundant or life eternal. So if you haven't made that decision to trust Jesus to be who He said He was and is, please don't delay. Believe me, it's a terrible feeling to reach the bridge without "exact change."

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