

The Calling

By Corine Pugh

Based on a true story of pioneer John Carling

“Build a house to my name, even in this place, that you may prove yourselves unto me that ye are faithful in all things whatsoever I command you” (D&C 124:55).

Isaac, Isaac.” It was his mother’s voice. “Your father needs you at the corral.”

Isaac raised his head and looked out the window. Sure enough, the sun was coming up, and that meant it was time for chores. Isaac stumbled out of bed and reached for his shirt. He could hear the oxen mooing.

As he went out the kitchen door, he saw Papa leading old Taurus through the gate.

“Where are you going so early, Papa?” Isaac asked.

“Just over to the fence. I need you to hold the grain bucket so Taurus will stand still.”

The ox bellowed, as if asking, “What is going on this morning?” But as Isaac held the bucket under his nose, Taurus calmed down and began licking up the grain with his long tongue. While the ox ate, Papa tied the halter rope securely to the fence.

When Mama stepped out the front door, Papa asked her, “I have a special project, Emeline. Will you please bring me the wide carpenter pencil from the desk?”

When Mama came back with the pencil, Papa laid some boards on the ground. Then, after looking carefully at Taurus, he began drawing on the smooth yellow wood.

“What are you doing, Papa?” Isaac asked.

“Brother Fordham and I have been given an important assignment for the temple,” Papa explained. “We are going to help make the 12 oxen statues to hold up the font in the baptistry. I am drawing the pattern, and Taurus is my model.”

Hearing his name, Taurus raised his head, then went back to his breakfast.

Isaac watched his father sketching long, wide lines. “That is beginning to look just like Taurus,” Isaac said. “But why did you choose him?”

“Because he is strong and the best ox I have ever seen. See how he stands? He seems to be aware of his importance. Taurus is obedient too.”

“This project is a very special calling, Papa. Isn’t it?”

“Yes, Son, it is. I am thankful I have been asked to help.”

Isaac stroked Taurus’s neck. He could feel the ox’s strong muscles. “What an honor for you, old boy,” he whispered.

Isaac finished his chores quickly. He even made his usual two dozen wooden clothespins faster than usual. He knew when he finished he would have time to do as he wished.

Today Isaac wanted to draw. His parents had given him permission to draw on the fireplace hearth, using pieces of charcoal from the burned logs. The charcoal washed off easily, and he could use it to make wide or narrow lines.

As Isaac drew Taurus, he thought about his father and the beautiful temple being built in Nauvoo. If Isaac was strong and obedient like Taurus, maybe the Lord would choose him to work on the temple, just like his father. ■





Share your talents, for that which we willingly share, we keep."

President Thomas S. Monson, "The Spirit of Relief Society," *Ensign*, May 1992, 101.

ILLUSTRATION BY JIM MADSEN

