Making Time For The Least of These My Brothers

Matt. 25:37-40

It was a cold winter's day that Sunday. The parking lot to the church was filling up quickly. I noticed as I got out of my car that fellow church members were whispering among themselves as they walked to the church.

As I got closer, I saw a man leaned up against the wall outside the church. He was almost lying down as if he was asleep. He had on a long trench coat that was almost in shreds and a hat topped his head, but pulled down so you couldn't see his face.

He wore shoes that looked 30 years old, too small for his feet, with holes all over them, and his toes stuck out. I assumed this man was homeless and asleep, so I walked on by and into the doors of the Church.

We all enjoyed fellowship for a few minutes, and then someone brought up the man who was lying outside. People snickered and gossiped, but no one bothered to ask him to come in, including me. A few moments later, church began. We all waited for the preacher to take his place and give us The Word when the doors to the church opened. In came the homeless man, walking down the aisle with his head down.

People gasped and whispered and made faces. He made his way down the aisle and up onto the pulpit. When he took off his hat and coat, my heart sank. There stood our preacher. He was the "homeless man".

No one said a word. The room was silent and still.

The preacher took his Bible and laid it on the stand.

"Folks, I don't think I have to tell you what I'm preaching about today. Jesus said, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'" He proceeded to preach a sermon about treating others with dignity and kindness even if they seem to be the "least".

Throughout the Gospels, Jesus has always laid emphasis upon “the least of these.” There is no Gospel that we can turn to that does not make us aware of what God expects of the Christian, yet there is so much that needs to be done. So many are going hungry and homeless. So many are lost and alone. The task, if we consider alone, is overwhelming. However, God provides us with the resources to participate in a small

but impactful way. We give diapers to many who cannot afford diapers. We give food to those who cannot afford to eat. For that, all are thankful.

I wonder if there is more we can do, and I believe there is. I believe that if you were to come out and give of your time, give your ideas, the time that you give and the ideas that you have can and would make a difference. We sometimes believe that one more person could not make a difference. You would be wrong because one more person could make a difference. You may believe you have no more to give, but so did this cracked pot in the following story:

A water bearer in India had two large pots. Each hung on the ends of a pole that he carried across his neck. One of the pots had a crack in it, while the other pot was perfect and always delivered a full portion of water.

At the end of the long walk from the stream to the house, the cracked pot arrived only half full. For a full two years this went on daily, with the bearer delivering only one and a half pots full of water to his house.

Of course, the perfect pot was proud of its accomplishments, perfect for which it was made. But the poor cracked pot was ashamed of its own imperfection and miserable that it was able to accomplish only half of what it had been made to do.

After two years of what it perceived to be a bitter failure, it spoke to the water bearer one day by the stream. "I am ashamed of myself, and I want to apologize to you. I have been able to deliver only half my load because this crack in my side causes water to leak out all the way back to your house. Because of my flaws, you have to do all of this work, and you don't get full value from your efforts," the pot said.

The bearer said to the pot, "Did you notice that there were flowers on your side of the path but not on the other pot's side? That's because I have always known about your flaw, and I planted flower seeds on your side of the path. Every day while we walk back, you've watered them. For two years, I have been able to pick these beautiful flowers to decorate the table. Without you being just the way you are, there would not be this beauty to grace the house."

If we would only allow God to use us as we are. You would be surprised at the difference that could be made. Just you, showing up. Just you giving a helping hand. Just you giving a little more of your precious time. Just you. Who knows, you may have the words that someone needs to hear who feels just like you.

Blessings,

Pastor Geof