

Children's sermon: December 4, 2011

**"Stanley ... the giver???"**

Do any of you play hockey???? .... do you like hockey???  
Just curious.

Anyway ... I know you are tired of me talking about "cups" ... so, today ... I'll talk about bags.  
Here's Fred ... a very festive fellow. Always in the giving-Christmas spirit. He has a bag ... and his bag is always full.  
Listen ... his bag has lots of "stuff" in it ... and he loves to give his "stuff" to others.

Unlike ol' Stanley here. As you can see -----Stanley holds onto his blanket ... so nobody else will take it.  
And ----- his bag is empty.

Stanley loves to "take" ... he doesn't like to give ... and when you live life like this ... your "bag"  
is going to be empty. One thing Stanley has always wanted ---- tickets to a hockey game. It's the way Stanley is ...  
he is always wanting stuff FOR HIMSELF.

Fred has been trying to teach Stanley to be a "giver" ... but It's not working.  
One day ... Fred gets so fed-up with Stanley's selfish ways that he empties his own bag ...

*"Here Stanley ... I'm giving you everything I have ...  
I have cups in my bag ... and MY CUPS ARE FULL ... UNLIKE YOURS ...  
Here are some straws ... and by the way: THIS IS THE LAST STRAW!!  
Balls and toys ... they are all yours.  
See???? ... this is what it's like to give ... something you never do!@!!"*

Fred goes away ... never to come back????

Time goes by.  
Things have become hard for Fred-the-giver.  
He loses his job ... loses his house ... has nowhere to go.

Stanley hears about what's happened to Fred.  
One day he finds Fred ... sitting by himself in a park. He looks so alone and sad.  
Stanley goes up to Fred ...

*"Fred ... I am so sorry. It's about time I did something for you."*  
Stanley empties his bag ... and gives everything to Fred: cups, straws, balls, toys, food ...  
Then he lets go of his precious blanket ... and puts it around Fred ... to keep him warm.  
For the first time in his life ... Stanley feels what it's like to give.

His bag is empty ... but his "cup is full"!@!!  
*"Fred ... come to my house ... stay with me ... I don't want you to be alone."*

Fred smiles. He may have lost a lot ... but he has gained a friend ... and Stanley --- after all this time ---  
has learned to be a "giver."

When Stanley gets home ... the phone rings.  
"Stanley ... I have a present for you ----- 2 HOCKEY TICKETS. And ... if we win the game ...  
we go to the finals ... it's called THE STANLEY CUP!@!!"  
Stanley takes Fred to the game. And for you, my friends ----- your very own "Stanley Cup" hockey bag ... and inside? ...  
there is a cup ... make sure it's always FULL!!