

Sermon: December 27, 2009

“The perfect gift”

So often ... at a time like Christmas ... we try get someone we love THE PERFECT GIFT.

You want this person TO LOVE what you have given them ----- “Uncle Don ... this is the best gift ever!!”
I remember a couple years ago ... at a family Christmas party ... I put together a “LOVE BUCKET” for each of
the nieces and nephews. Each bucket included the kinds of “stuff” I give away here every Sunday morning.

I couldn't wait for them to open their “buckets.”

Well ... they did. And ----- what I had given them went over like the proverbial “lead balloon.” I was so
disappointed ... WHY?????? ----- because the gift was “all about me.” I really wasn't thinking of
them. After all ----- they don't go to church here ... their humble minds haven't been jaded by all my

“Fred give-aways”!!

(I made a little come-back this year ... I got them light-blue “all about love” t-shirts ... they like them!!)

Yes ... often our gift-giving is about wanting to be noticed ... and appreciated.

But really ----- GIVING IS ABOUT THE HEART.

Giving is its own reward.

I did a funeral yesterday for a lady who had no kids of her own. Her claim to fame ---- being an AUNT.

She is one of those people who buried herself in the lives of others.

When her husband was sick ... she took care of him.

When her parents couldn't take care of themselves ... she did.

When nieces and nephews needed a boost ... she gave it to them.

My guess is ----- each of us has a person or two in our lives like this lady.

They give ... they give some more it's the “giving” bringing them daily joy.

I often mention my Roseland grandparents. I loved being at their humble bungalow. Ice-cream for breakfast ...
late nights with Lawrence Welk on tv ... fishing, ball games, going to Ben Franklin (the five and dime!!).

I would tell my parents when I got home: “GRANDMA AND GRANDPA ARE SO RICH!!”

I found out ... when they left this world ... they were --- for the most part --- penny-less.

They gave out of their poverty.

Anyone ... especially someone like me ... it's easy to give out of our abundance, from what's left over.

But to give from the VERY ESSENCE of who we are ----- this is what life is all about!!

I want and need to be more like this.

Not just at Christmas ... not just at birthdays ... but tomorrow, and a week from Thursday.

I enjoy today's gospel about Jesus running away from his parents at the age of 12 ... and they find him
teaching “the elite” in the temple.

So ironic ----- it takes the “child-like wisdom” of a 12-year-old to help the “temple-types” understand the true
meaning of religion!@!!

They thought religion was “about them.” Religion is not about what's in it for us it's not about our position
or salvation ... it's not about “whether or not we are going to MAKE IT” ...

Religion is about “us together” ... it's about the footsteps of a gentle carpenter.

I receive a good number of letters ... some encouraging, some not.

One I received recently basically said ----- I don't “preach the word of God.” Which --- may or
may not be true.

I think of those magical words in the Gospel of John:

“The word becomes flesh ... and dwells among us.”

God's word is amazing.

The word "WORD" ... well, it means: *God alive.*

It means ----- God at work ... God "revealing" himself to us.

No book ... not even the Bible ----- can fully contain God's word.

God's "word" is always ALIVE ... always new ...always fresh ... always coming to us!!@

THE WORD BECOMES FLESH ...

... when you visit someone who has Alzheimer's and may not even know who you are

... when you make that phone call you seem always "too busy" to make ...

... when you shovel your neighbor's sidewalk without being noticed ...

Yes, the word becomes flesh ...

.... when you give to your grand-kids, even when there is not much in your cup ...

...when you open your heart, when you can't afford to open your wallet ...

I'm not sure anyone can really "preach" God's word ... especially someone like me ...

All we can do is LIVE IT ...

enjoy it,

be nourished by it.

Most all ... God's word comes alive ... when we treat each other with love and respect.

It's in moments born of a carpenter's love & respect that the "word" becomes more powerful than ever.

Don Borling

All Saints Lutheran Church

13350 LaGrange Road

Orland Park, IL 60462

December 27, 2009

www.allsaintsjoy.com

allsaintsjoy@sbcglobal.net

708-448-2939