

Sermon: December 26, 2010

“Apron of goodness”

A lot of us have read many text-books ----- preparing us for whatever it is that we are doing with our lives.
Electrician, accountant, machinist, teacher ... yes, we’ve had our “training.”

I went to college for 4 years ... then 4 more in seminary.

I’ve read all kinds of books about God, the Bible, Communion, how the church began ...

I was never taught about “spaghetti dinners” ... church deacons ... putting up tables and chairs ...
making glogg the Sunday before Christmas ... making sure the coffee is on ...
8 years of school ... and, as you know, I don’t know much about anything!@!!

You know as well as I do ... you can know all the “information and stuff” about your craft ... but unless you
practice what you do FROM YOUR HEART ... well, it’s not the same.

My favorite text-book is the newspaper. This is where God lives ... this is where “humble religion and
spirituality” come to life.

**a family in Northlake ... they lose everything in a fire --- EVERYTHING!@!!

And yet they have their most amazing Christmas ... because they discover the depth of love --- from family
and friends.

**a 90-year-old man in Aurora. Never went to a Chicago Bulls game ... never met one of the players.

One of the “old warriors” --- Bob Love --- hears about this, and spends Christmas Eve with this gentleman.

**There is a Black Hawks player ... whose dad and brother suffer from the same terminal illness.
He plays every game in honor of their journey ---- without saying a word.

I read this stuff, and I’m reminded ----- this is the way life should be.

This is where God lives ... this makes the good Lord smile.

Do you have someone in your life ... who, for you, is “the face of Christmas”???

You think of this person ... you are reminded of him/her ... you have memories ----- and all these
pictures come alive at Christmas time.

I walk into the church this morning ... and once again I look at the words on our stewardship button:

*“BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO GIVE WITHOUT REMEMBERING,
AND RECEIVE WITHOUT FORGETTING.”*

Grandma ... in her little Roseland bungalow.

As a kid ... I didn’t think she had any clothes. Every time we entered her home ... she wore an apron,
about as big as her lawn. It has pockets.

“Grandma ... do you have any ketchup?” ----- she reached into her apron and pulled it out.

“An extra fork??” ----- it’s in the apron.

Yes ---- I call it HER APRON OF GOODNESS.

I love people like my grandma ... they have this knack of creating “something out of nothing.”

Left-overs become a banquet.

Poverty becomes richness.

A quarter here ... a Swedish pancake there ... her time ... dinner on Wednesday.

Her favorite word? ----- THANK-YOU.

*Thank-you for coming ... thank-you for letting me come ... thanks for the gift ... thanks for this moment ...
thanks for letting me come and help clean your house ...*

GRANDMA ----- WE DIDN’T DO ANYTHING!@!! “Thank-you,” she replies.

I remember when she started to forget things ... she was confused most of the time.
When my mom died ... grandma couldn't understand.
Finally ... it was "assisted living."

We would visit ----- she thanked us for coming.
We would tell her how much she did for us all her life ... she replies: I never did anything!!
"Oh, Donnie ... have you seen my purse?"
"Yes, Grandma ... it's where it's always been ----- in your lap!!" She laughed. "Thank-you."

*"BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO GIVE WITHOUT REMEMBERING,
AND RECEIVE WITHOUT FORGETTING ..."*

I see my grandma's face ... I hear her voice.
Even after all these years ... in her death ... she teaches me about what's important in life and what's not.

Yes, today there are few more empty chairs. The leaves are falling off ... the tree is dry.
Today I baptize two of my grand-kids ... and we begin to say "good-bye" to our traveling family.
We sometimes get hung-up on what baptism means ... and when and if our kids and grand-kids are baptized.

But for me ----- BAPTISM is a reminder ...
We don't know what the future will bring ...
Our journeys are long ... and short ... and everything in-between ...
But there is one lesson I want to teach my kids ... my grand-kids ... and even myself:

*never be too busy,
never be so "into yourself" ...
you are never too old, or too young ----*

to say the magic words: "THANK-YOU."

Just think of what God does for us every day ...
look at his son ...

and think of what's inside that big apron.

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December 26, 2010