

Sermon: January 17, 2010

**“Filling the jar-of-life”**

I, like you, have seen a lot of “old wine” this week ... dried-up wine skins ... empty jars ... lots of sadness ... lots of pictures and images speaking of hopelessness and pain. Haiti ... oh, Haiti ----- the pain you are going through. Kids and parents so desperate for the basics in life. Little Mattie Stepanek has taught us ----- every person has a “heart-song” ... each person and soul and spirit is so precious. So, when we see pictures of poverty and hunger and desperation ... it just rips us apart.

I feel guilty. I have a house ... I have a church ... I have a bit of money in my pockets. I even thought to myself yesterday ----- “maybe I shouldn’t go to the dollar store today ... I should give that money to Haiti-relief.” It’s easy ... in times like these ... to question our priorities. There is always going to be someone like Pat Robertson ... who tries to get people to see “the devil at work” in tragedies like this. There will always be people trying to take advantage of others’ giving and good intentions.

When we look at what has happened in Haiti ...  
When we look back at the tsunami a few years ago and the violence of 9-11 ...  
When we think of what has happened to many of our veterans and military folks overseas ...  
It’s easy for us to lose “that skip in our steps” ...  
But ---- WE CAN’T AFFORD TO!!  
Instead of giving less ... we need to give more.  
Instead of caring less ... we need to care more.  
Instead of losing faith in the goodness of God and the power of the human spirit ... we need to affirm it more and more, and then rediscover ----- what it is in life that fuels our soul and our passion!!

Good gospel lesson this morning. Jesus at the wedding, turning water into wine ----- kind-of Jesus’ “coming-out” party. This is really more than a story of turning water into wine ... in fact, it’s not the main point. In life ----- we are like the “empty jars.” In fact ... life is like an “empty jar.” The jar is empty and everyone looks around ... as if to say ---- “Now whose fault is it that this jar is empty?”  
My cup is empty ... your cup is empty ... there is not enough to go around ...  
We look at the other person: WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO ABOUT IT????  
Something goes wrong.  
A country is almost destroyed.  
A kid needs a home.  
My mother is lonely at the nursing home.  
Nobody volunteers to do the job.  
*We look around and wait for someone else to carry the torch and do something!!*

I remember years ago ... having breakfast with my dad and some of his Swedish cronies. They all sit ... drink ump-teen cups of coffee. My dad looks at me ----- “Don, watch what happens when the waitress bring the bill.”  
“What do you mean?” ... I wonder.  
“You’ll see ...” my dad smiles.  
The bill comes ... and it sits there, in the middle of the table. One by one ----- Bernie, Axel, Art, and Merle ... they go to the washroom. They come back ... with their hands firmly on the “padlock” that usually protects their wallets from ever being opened ... and they awkwardly ask my dad:  
“Glenn, where is the bill???”  
My dad smiles ... or smirks ----- “IT’S PAID IN FULL.”

Yes, it's kind-of like life. If we wait around long enough ... someone else may pay the bill.  
Or ----- we can reach-in ... take matters into our own hands ... and make something happen!!

The miracle is not so much Jesus turning water into wine. It's that he takes these empty jars ... old jars, old wine-skins ... and he fills them with ordinary water ... and then something EXTRAORDINARY HAPPENS.

The jar is our life.

The jar is our world.

We are the water ... we are the *potential miracle*.

We are the ones ... with God's blessing ... who are called to make things happen in life.

Jesus has paid the bill.

He has covered our tab.

He has paid the price.

Now ----- IT IS OUR TURN.

Whether or not I go to the dollar store will not affect the course of history in Haiti.

In and of itself ... what we do here today with our love bucket will not stop the misery.

But ... THIS ISN'T THE POINT.

**Our calling is to give ... to open our hearts & our spirits & our souls & our heart-songs ...**

**AND OUR WALLETS ... everyday!!**

Life is not always about changing the world ... it's about FILLING THE WORLD ---- with love, with goodness, and whatever we have to offer.

Wineskins have many shapes ... there are jars all over the place.

Haiti, nursing homes, hospitals, and factories.

Churches and basements ... soccer fields and concert halls ... classrooms and living rooms.

Re-hab centers. And they all need to be filled ...

and we can't wait for "someone else" to do it.

Jesus and God have paid the bill.

***The rest is up to us.***

We never walk the other way.

We never stop going to the dollar store.

We can't afford to lose "what it is" that gives us a "skip in our steps."

Why??????? ... because there is a child in Haiti ... there is someone out there who needs a good church ... there are tons of people who need hope.

Yes, life is a love-bucket.

Life is a jar.

It's time to jump in!!

Don Borling

All Saints Lutheran Church

13350 LaGrange Road

Orland Park, IL 60462

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[www.allsaintsjoy.com](http://www.allsaintsjoy.com)

[allsaintsjoy@sbcglobal.net](mailto:allsaintsjoy@sbcglobal.net)

708-448-2939