

Sermon: June 27, 2010

“The Help”

I’m reading the book ... entitled “The Help.”

About being a black maid in southern white Mississippi. Early ‘60’s.

These are incredible women ----- strong willed, hard-working ... they do everything: cook, clean, raise their own kids, raise white kids. They are combination mom, grandma, even “best-friend” ... but --- they are also “property.” They are owned ... “prisoners” ... being a servant is what they know.

Inside their souls ----- they burn with fire ... they yearn to be heard, their dignity screams out.

Last year at confirmation camp ... something “burned” inside of me. Not sure exactly what it is.

Maybe as we get older ... we see and feel things, just “because we do.” Ever get this way???

Could be our age ... just life ... we get more sensitive ... we look inside peoples’ souls more.

You’ve been to camp, or on a retreat. You’ve spent a few days in a motel or resort. Time in a hospital, in a nursing home. Do you ever wonder about “the help”????? ... all the people who make your stay possible??? At confirmation camp ... at Carthage College, where we stay ... there’s all kinds of “help.”

The lady who cleans the dorms.

The dishwashers in the cafeteria.

The gentleman and ladies who wipe the tables and put the chairs back after every meal.

The lady who cleans the chapel, so it’s nice when we have worship in the morning.

I found out:

*Savannah has 14 grandchildren.

*Margo is working to put her 2 daughters through college.

*William is developmentally disabled ... and has worked at Carthage for 10 years.

*Ernestine has 3 teen-age boys.

*There are 4 cooks in the kitchen, 5 dishwashers for every meal, each dorm has 2 custodians.

These folks are not young ... they look tired most of the time.

Remember the “Christmas jar”??????? ... sitting outside someone’s front door, no name ... just full of money to help their daughter. Do you have a “jar” at home ----- a nickel here, a dime there ... maybe a dollar bill once-in-a-while. You put spare change into a jar ... and ----- IT ADDS UP!!

The love bucket ...the gospel of goodness ...

Anyway ----- over the past year, I quietly resolved: all those who ‘help us” at camp this year ...

they will ***not go un-thanked!!***

The butcher, the baker, the candlestick maker ----- they will all get something.

This year ... every person who “waited” on us ... got an “un-marked” envelope.

You know what it says in the Bible: ***NOTHING SAYS THANK-YOU LIKE CASH!!***

And like my dad always told me ...even in my “older years” ----- Don, you are never too old to enjoy getting “cash” in an envelope. It just feels so GOOD!!

Pretty ironic ... the day after “the gifts” are handed out ... the day after “the quiet love bucket” was at work ...

Well, Savannah doesn’t look so tired ...

The cooks come out and talk to the kids ...

Even William --- the developmentally disabled floor-sweeper --- comes out: “Hey, Reverend ... there is one guy in the kitchen WE forget to thank.”

(I’m thinking to myself ---- “William, since when are WE the ones handing out the cash!@!!”)

Anyway ... I reach into my Norm Van Lier garage sale backpack ... pull out an un-marked envelope ... and William skips into the kitchen.

I think of the simple words in the 2nd lesson today ----- “the fruits of the spirit.”

*love joy peace patience gentleness
and ----- “a bit of cash in an envelope” ...
along with the magic word: THANK-YOU!!*

“The help” is all around us.

People who quietly help us through our daily journey.

There are lots of crabs out there ... who won't give you the time of day.

But then there are others: a gentle nod, a look of kindness, a small envelope.

We just never know when Jesus' peace will touch us and change the direction of our day.

We talk a lot --- in religious circles --- about “Jesus coming back.”

Well ... in the meantime ... HE IS ALREADY HERE.

He's “in the help” ... he's amazingly close to us. And ... in our troubled world ----- it's fun to see and appreciate small glimpses of goodness and grace.

Speaking of goodness and grace ...

Last week ... in our service projects ... I took a group of our kids to the SALVATION ARMY HEADQUARTERS in the inner city of Racine.

We go to the gym. Now ---- this is an old gymnasium!!

No air-conditioning ... scratched-up floors ... basketball rims that rattle and shake ... smooth balls that barely bounce. There's a bunch of young, skinny, inner city kids playing we enter the building ... they walk up to us: WE CHALLENGE YOU GUYS TO A GAME!@!!

Since these kids are young ... I tell our boys: don't steal the ball ... don't block their shots ... don't press ... give them a chance ... they are younger than you.

The game begins ... and within 5 minutes ... we are behind 24 to 0!!

I call my team back together: FORGET WHAT I JUST SAID ... THEY ARE KILLING US!!

We lost ... big – time!!

But ... our kids loved it. Afterwards ... there are high-fives and hugs all around.

Before we leave ... I talk to our kids: NOW, WHAT CAN WE DO?????

What do you mean, Don?????

I mean ----- let's talk “love-bucket” for a minute.

Oh NOW WE UNDERSTAND!!

The next day we go back. We have a new basketball for them ... and ----- a white envelope ... containing \$200.

THE SALVATION ARMY BELIEVES IN JESUS ... very much.

Our kids wanted to make sure that Jesus became just a bit more “real” on an ordinary Wednesday!!

Don Borling
All Saints Lutheran Church
13350 LaGrange Road
Orland Park, IL 60462
June 27, 2010

www.allsaintsjoy.com allsaintsjoy@sbcglobal.net 708-448-2939