

Sermon: May 2, 2010
“It just melted away ...”

So many things have touched my heart this week ...

Little thoughts ... lots of prayers ... moments of kindness and grace ...

Looking at our sign one last time ---- “oodles and noodles of grace” ... can’t help but laugh.

Coming in this morning ----- pin-wheels along the side-walk (cost only a buck ... they’ve lasted over a month!!) ...the rain this morning, followed by the sunshine ...

I think about Natasha McShane from Ireland ... her friend Stacey Jurich ... their brutal beating ... strangers reaching out to them and their families. Inspiring to see how people care.

How about the school in Plainfield ----- RACHEL’S CHALLENGE.

Rachel Scott was the first student killed in the Columbine massacre. Just before that day ... she had written an essay entitled ---- “Chain reaction of kindness.” How goodness and respect are contagious ... especially when it starts within your own school. Now there is a national program ... and the kids at Plainfield middle school are a part of it.

The other day ... the principal of our son Quinton’s school calls. She is quick to say ---- “This is NOT about Quinton!!” With a sigh of relief, I talk to her.

Cheryl is a caring principal. One of her teachers is very sick with cancer. Another teacher has a son with brain cancer. Several teachers have said “good-bye” to at least one of their parents this year.

Cheryl asks ---- “We need to do something to bring them spiritual support ... can we have some kind of worship service at your church after school???”

How inspiring to have a principal who cares so much. Plus ---- I’ve always wanted our church to be a place of **healing** ... not just for us, but for the community.

Churches, like anything else, are imperfect. But you never know how many lives you touch. To each of you --- your generosity ... your goodness and grace ... from love buckets to offering envelopes ... you make more of a difference than you’ll ever know!@!!

In life ... people “watch us.” Oh ---- they do!! People watch us in the “common moments in life.”

When you walk into church ... when you squeeze the produce in aisle 3, shopping with your son ...

how you react when something “good” comes your way ... how you handle a crisis ... just going your job ... washing dishes ... sitting in church with your child.

OUR DOOR IS OPEN FOR A REASON ... THE COFFEE IS ALWAYS ON FOR A REASON -----
you just never know what sort of “goof” may come through the door ... goofs like you and me!!

A couple weeks ago a gentleman comes to our church for the first time.

(I always wonder ----- will he/she come back??)

Well ... he did come back. He is dating a lady from our church ... and I guess she told him ----- “If you want to see me on Sundays ... it’ll be at a church on LaGrange Road!@!!”

Church is over ... everyone is gone ... I’m just about to leave ... and I notice a letter on my desk ... it is from this gentleman ... here is the gist of the letter ...

“Pastor Don ... I’ve been a life-long church go-er ... reading the Bible almost everyday.

Something happened on that infamous day ... 9-11. I got very angry ... lost my faith ... stopped going to church. I’m not saying this was right ... it’s just the way I felt.

Last Sunday I came to church with Rita. We just happened to be sitting behind a gentleman and his son. His son is disabled. I couldn’t help but notice the way they interacted ... the love, the tenderness. I was touched by how much the church embraces them ... and then you and your assistant sharing communion with them towards the end of the service ... it all touches my heart.

Yes ... last Sunday ... in your church ... all my anger melted away. I will be back ---- every Sunday.”

And one of the ironies of all this? This “guy” who brought his son ... HE HAS NEVER COME TO CHURCH

BY HIMSELF ... WITH HIS SON.

He's not a church-going guy. And yet ... on this day ... two "strangers" connect ... and somehow -----
God uses this "spontaneous moment" to bring a bit of love & grace into a man's life.

LIFE IS **NOT** a performance.

Life is not a show.

Life is not a demonstration of how good or important we are.

LIFE IS LIFE.

It's the moments ... strung together by knots of goodness and grace.

I wish ... as a church, as a people, as a world community ----- we could somehow capture (or
re-capture) the innocence and power of the gospel.

In the gospel for today ---- Jesus is about to leave this earth.

*"I am with you only a little while longer ... and where I am going, you cannot come. So, I give you a new
commandment: LOVE ONE ANOTHER, AS I HAVE LOVED YOU. By this ... all people will know YOU ARE
MY DISCIPLES."*

The gentleman who came to church with his son ... certainly no one would accuse him of being a disciple.

He would probably say: I AM NO DISCIPLE ... I DON'T EVEN GO TO CHURCH!@!!

Well, he is a disciple. Why? ... because he loves his son. You don't have to say anything ... you just
gotta love ----- this is a disciple's trademark.

Yes, our door is open.

People walk in.

Some come back ... some will leave.

But ... as long as we love and care for each other ----- Jesus continues to live.

Being his disciple ... *it's an honor and a joy.*

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