



“Expressing Your Greatness”

1 Peter 4:8-11

“Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen”

“There once lived a man who decided to dedicate his life to helping others. He went about his task in a very quiet way, showing up to help a neighbor repair a roof or harvest a field, then returning home to tend his small field. He was a good farmer and was thus able to grow many beautiful vegetables, which he gave away to those in need. One day, a terrible storm came and destroyed his home, as well as his fields. His neighbors, grateful for all the kindness he had shown them, rebuilt his home twice as big, planted new crops in his fields, and filled his yard with fat pigs and healthy chickens.

Looking over his bounty, the man determined that he had so much, he could expand his efforts to help others in the surrounding villages. Rather than hoarding what he had, he spent it freely, constantly looking for ways to make people happy. Soon, his deeds were spoken of far and wide, and his name was praised throughout the land. People began to make pilgrimages to his farm because he was such a peaceful and loving person, that just to be in his presence was a blessing. When he died after a long and joy filled life, his village decided to preserve his home as a shrine so that whoever came there would be reminded of the magnificent life he lived in service to others.”

After reading this story I remembered a plaque that was given to me a long time ago. It’s one that I still own today and one that I have looked at often through the years, especially when times have gotten tough, or I needed to be reminded of the things that really matter. The plaque reads: “Happiness comes from spiritual wealth not material wealth. Happiness comes from giving, not getting. If we try hard to bring happiness to others, we cannot stop it from coming to us also. To get joy, we must give it, and to keep joy, we must scatter it.” These words have always presented to me an approach to life that needed to be respected and strived toward. Although they have grown with me and adapted to the realities that surrounded me, the interpreted reality of what they were saying and pointing toward

hasn't changed or been silent. Perhaps the great, unforgettable Martin Luther King Jr. said it best when he stated: "Everyone can be great because everyone can serve."

You see, I believe that both of these sayings reflect one very important fact of life: it's all about giving and sharing. In our own unique way, each and every one of us can have as much impact as the mythical farmer in the above story. We don't have to harvest our neighbors' fields or give away all that we possess. All it takes is a commitment to scatter joy. Greatness comes in all shapes and sizes, and most true heroes are unsung. You don't have to be a Martin Luther King Jr., or that mythical farmer to serve the world. Each of us has our own particular talent or ability, and when we offer it to the world around us, we are expressing our own unique greatness, and in turn scattering a sense of joy.

Today, I would like to encourage you to think about the ways in which you might be able to spread a little joy. What is your magnificent and singular gift that the world is waiting to receive? Take the time to think and to pray on that question. Take an honest look around. Open your heart and your eyes, allow yourself to see where your Lord is leading the way for you to spread that joy. And then take that leap of faith and put that gift to use. Share what you have been blessed with, that others might in return be blessed through you; that the Lord your God, might be praised and given glory!

Prayer:

Almighty God, you've given us far more blessings than we can count. We pray that every day might be an opportunity to recognize those occasions and openings where we might be able to freely share those gifts. Lord, in all that we do help us to serve others to the best of our abilities; keep us focused on you, that all might be done in your name and to your glory. Amen