

HEART-TO-HEART

We are reminded that Christ is in our hearts and we are in His and that love connects us all in unity.

*Give thanks to the LORD,
for he is good; his love
endures forever.
Psalm 107:1*



Give Thanks

This year Thanksgiving Day will be celebrated on November 27. It is a day for reflection on all that we've been blessed with. It is a day that we gather with family and friends to strengthen our relationships. It is a day that we give to others who may be less fortunate than ourselves.

Imagine...what if every day were Thanksgiving Day? What would our world be like? Would we be able to sustain the feeling of thankfulness and giving every day of the year? Or would it lose its value?

As followers of Jesus, every day should be a day to rejoice, to express our gratitude for the gift that Jesus gave to all of us, and to be generous with others.

James E. Faust stated, "The thankful heart opens our eyes to a multitude of blessings that continually surround us." May we be "those people" whose hearts overflow with gratitude and joy so that it spills over onto others.



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Jesus Had Emotions Too: The Unmerited Gift

Hebrews 4:15

“For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.”

Introduction

The last two months we explored how Jesus experienced frustration and despair. This month we will look at how Jesus expressed compassion—even in one of His darkest moments on the cross.

Key Passage: Luke 23:39–43

One of the criminals who were hanged railed at him, saying, “Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!” But the other rebuked him, saying, “Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong.” And he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” And he said to him, “Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise.”

Observations:

Make at least 10 observations about the passage above, write down everything you see in the passage

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

Context

Matthew 27:44 and Mark 15:32 confirm that in the beginning, both criminals mocked Jesus. But while one continued to blaspheme Him, the other recognized who He was and asked to simply be remembered.

Jesus’ response went far beyond what was asked:

- The criminal thought of a distant future—Jesus promised today.
- He asked only to be remembered—Jesus promised he would be with Him.
- He asked about a kingdom—Jesus promised paradise.

In His final hours, Jesus showed compassion to someone who could offer Him nothing in return. This moment reminds us that compassion is freely given.

Journal: Reflection Question

Think of a time when you chose to show compassion—or when someone showed compassion to you.

- What did that experience reveal to you?
- How did it change the way you see yourself or others?



The Lord is gracious and righteous;
our God is full of compassion.
Psalm 116:5

Grateful, Thankful

by Jeanne Nagatani

Thanksgiving Day is right around the corner. As I reflect on Jesus and how He has affected my life, it gives me pause to remember to thank Him for all that He has done for me.

Studying the Bible tells me how Jesus suffered as He took my sins upon Himself. This didn't resonate with me until I saw the movie "The Passion of the Christ." I saw how Jesus suffered for me; but the movie did not truly show the reality of how much Jesus suffered, the physical pain that He went through for me, a sinner. It was only a glimpse of what He went through. When I watched the movie and the pain that Jesus endured for me, I was sobbing.

When the worship team leads us in songs of praise to Jesus, some songs touch me so much that the tears just flow down my face. Thinking back about times that I know that Jesus had a hand in my life, I am thankful that I became a part of His family. He's always there through my ups and downs.

I am so grateful that Jesus is the Way for me to reach out to God and that He took my sins upon Himself so that I could be free to worship God.

I hope that you can also become a believer and that Jesus can be your Way, your Truth and your Light just as He is mine.



Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.

Matthew 11:28

The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said: "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah, and he will reign for ever and ever."

Revelation 11:15



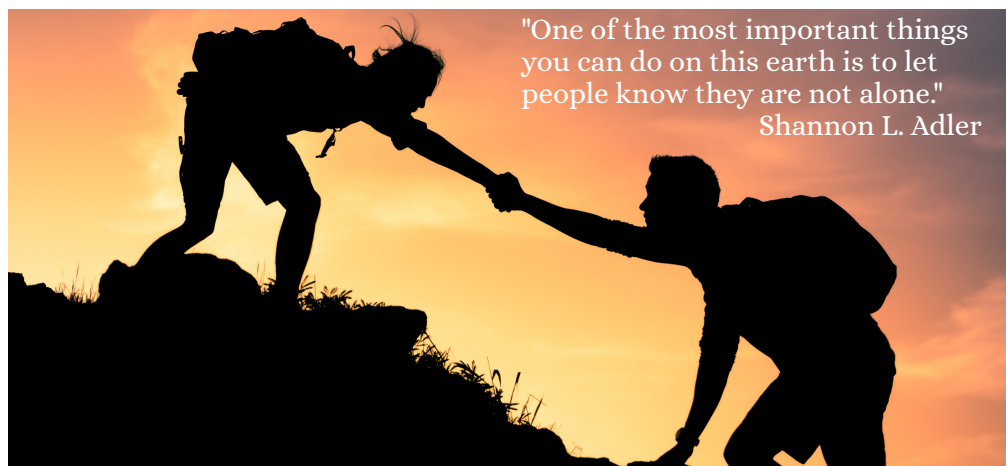
Generosity

by Julie Morita

I believe that thankfulness and giving go hand-in-hand. If you are thankful for what you have and feel blessed, you are more likely to be generous. That generosity may be expressed in different ways - through monetary donations or giving of your time. While the financial aspect is important, I also believe that giving of your time is the most expensive gift that you can give to others.

Giving of your time can be seen as connecting with others through text messages, phone calls, or meeting them in person. It can be to volunteer and provide a service to others. It's about support - providing manpower, providing a listening ear, providing words of encouragement, using your talents to help and bring joy to others.

In the parable of the bags of gold found in Matthew 25:14-30, we are reminded that God expects us to actively share the abilities, wealth, and opportunities that He provides to us. It's our call to use the resources that God has given to us to achieve His purposes. Be bold, courageous and generous, and give your time to others. There is joy in giving.



"One of the most important things you can do on this earth is to let people know they are not alone."
Shannon L. Adler



"Don't judge each day by the harvest you reap, but by the seeds you plant."

Robert Louis Stevenson



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