

Grace-filled Voices

November 18, 2014

Mini-Ministry Miracles

by Robbin Gates

As we approach the holiday season, we often find ourselves with many opportunities to offer gestures of kindness, generosity, time, talents, and the like. And surely, each act is a genuine blessing in and of itself, and we are most assuredly doing God's work. But, how often do we really pause during our busy day to seek out – open our eyes to realize – the many and very frequent opportunities the Lord lays in our path to minister to someone? Sometimes, the most profound blessings of all are the unexpected. The intangible acts of kindness (giving of time, wisdom, listening, a smile, encouragement, hope) tend to touch the human soul the most. God lays them at our feet, but do we see them, look straight ahead, or step over them?

Opportunities to make a difference in someone's life are an extension of the Lord's will for them, through us, and they abound. After all, isn't every blessing, large and small - when it brings to another person a touch of God - isn't it *always* a mini miracle? For just as a small sin is equal to a big sin, a mini blessing is always equal to, and sometimes greater than, a miracle by mortal standards.

While on recent vacation, I had the wonderful opportunity to attend Sunday church services at 300-yr. old Bruton church in colonial Williamsburg, VA. After the powerful service, I was involved in my own thoughts rather than mingling in their fellowship time, and I almost missed the pleasure of talking with a young man, who the Lord placed literally in my path and who looked a bit hesitant. As we con-

versed, he said he was debating whether to come back to church, and possibly joining, when I replied, "Young man, you may just find the answers you are looking for here. You certainly will find God here." He smiled. I didn't see him talk to anyone else, just as I hadn't much talked to anyone else, but I think God paired us up for those few minutes, perhaps so the Lord could plant a seed in this shy son.

Have you noticed how equally important it is to allow ourselves to receive an act of kindness from others? This hit me like a bolt the previous day while still in the colonial town. I was frustrated that my camera photo capacity was full and I couldn't take any pictures; after all, I'd never return to this quaint town and surely wouldn't remember it all. So, I scurried over to a little walking tour and tentatively joined them. Coming straight toward me on the little dirt road in the middle of the group was a man and woman of meager means, dressed in well-worn overalls, no camera at all, each holding hands with a small child, of different ethnicity. What struck me so hard was they were all smiling (with few teeth) so joyously from the heart, with their eyes wide open, all sharing this wondrous experience with each other, and you could tell it was such a highlight in their life. I was immediately stopped in my tracks, humbled to the core, overflowing with thanksgiving, wiped away a tear of joy for them, and for the lesson our gracious Lord had just given me. So, let us always be open to receiving the Lord's unique gifts for us that He is so willing to bestow.

I had been missing it, trying to do things my way. Like our dear Jan Simon said while ministering to others recently, "Let God be God, and let us be us." Let's not try to do His job. His plan is the right plan, and only He knows what that is and when.

After the tender experience with the tour folks, I meandered further and came upon a card that I opened which said, "Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take, but by the moments of our life that take our breath away."

And when that same day, teenage kids marched through the little colonial dirt streets crisply and purposefully while playing the fife and drums, taking us back to the life of those in that era and what they went through no matter their role in life, Chris and I were profoundly moved and immediately joined the other people that spontaneously followed the band their entire route. We all just wanted to be close to them; wanted to hold on to the feeling. We all cheered and applauded the youngsters after the final note, and they beamed with pride, a few of them were a bit misty eyed, as we were also. Thank you, Lord, for giving us that precious and vulnerable moment, and for the opportunity for so many of us to pause, say a prayer for those so long now gone, and to accept the blessing of that experience.

And then there's the unexpected result from the recent Grace prayer quilt our ministry gals whipped up for my Uncle Glenn, dealing with an obscure incurable blood disease. Not knowing if Glenn knows the Lord, we sent the quilt and card, preceded by a phone call with prayer, and 2 days after receipt, he called with an update. Although nothing positive on the medical front, he said knowing that other people

cared, people that didn't even know him, that they prayed for him made such a difference. Said he no longer felt alone and that he has "turned a corner on his attitude" and now has hope. Glenn kept repeating, "It has to be the prayers, it has to be the prayers, cause it happened right after that." How joyous that we were all part of the Lord's plan to extend some hope into the heart of an 80-yr. old man in his time of need. A mini-miracle? To a man who "believes what I believe, but I don't know how to let it in," yes, it truly is.

So my friends, let's give to others our time and our undivided attention and the Lord will give us the words – with calm compassion and peace.

We do not need formal organized events or clubs or a calendar time of year to be "little Christs" to others, or to receive. Just view others as if they were Jesus standing before us, and treat them accordingly.

And don't be frustrated with the very human "Oh, I could've done that / I should've done this," rather, keep your hearts and minds open to see and feel – and be ready to give and receive – the next little scenario God orchestrates.

So, for this most holy and glorious season, let's give and receive the fruit of the Lord's blessings, with the word of God on our lips and emanating from our hearts. Let's see what wondrous blessings come forth. Have a joyous and peaceful season, laced with lots of love and overflowing with thanksgiving.

With much love to my Grace family,
Robbin

This Week at Grace

November 18—November 25, 2014

Tues. November 18

11:30 a.m. Bible Study
 4:30 p.m. Healing Eucharist at CHC
 7:00 p.m. **"How Should We Then Live?"**

Wed. November 19

10:00 a.m. **Holy Eucharist Service in chapel**
 2:00 p.m. **"How Should We Then Live?"**
 3:30 p.m. Staff Meeting
 6:00 p.m. **Vestry Meeting**

Thurs. November 20

7:30 a.m. Bible Study
 10:30 a.m. Sr. Women's Fellowship at Grace
 11:30 a.m. Healing Eucharist—CHC
 3:00 p.m. Choir Rehearsal
 5:30 p.m. Praise Team Rehearsal

Fri. November 21

Fr. Joe's Day Off
 9:30 a.m. Friday Bulletin Folders
 6:30 p.m. Evening Prayer in chapel

Sat. November 22

8:00 a.m. Men's Fellowship
 7:30 a.m. **Golf Tournament at Welk Resort**

Sun. November 23

7:30 a.m. Spoken Eucharist Service
 9:15 a.m. Nursery opens
 9:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist Service
 9:30 a.m. Children's Church
 11:00a.m. Coffee & Fellowship

Mon. November 24

Tues. November 25

11:30 a.m. Bible Study
 4:30 p.m. Healing Eucharist at CHC
 7:00 p.m. **"How Should We Then Live?"**

Coming up

Golf Tournament at Welk Resort—Nov. 22nd
Thanksgiving Day Service and Dinner at Grace.

Sign up for these events by signing the sheet on the welcome table or calling the Church Office.

Grace Anglican Church
760-730-9900

Www.graceanglicanchurch.com
churchoffice@graceanglicanchurch.com

Bible Readings for November 23, 2014

Ezekiel 34:11-17
 Psalm 95:1-7
 1 Corinthians 15:20-28
 Matthew 25:31-46

We are using the English Standard Version of the Bible and the Lectionary from the Book of Common Prayer (Year A)

Sunday Servers

November 23, 2014	9:30 a.m. Service
First Reader	Paula Sholly
Psalm Reader	Jean Hawk
Second Reader	Trish Stewart
Intercessor	Frances Slaughter
Lay Euch. Ministers	Myrna and John Lipnicke
Acolytes	Frances Slaughter
Welcomers	Myrna Lipnicke, John Gerhart
Ushers	Ray Seibold, Jim Livingston
Vestry Person of Day	Linnie Phelps
Healing Ministers	Jr & Ann Fox
Counters	Cline Handy Helen Reid