



WE ARE IN THIS TOGETHER

THEME: Compassion, Serving Others

Romans 15:1-2 (NIV) *We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. ² Each of us should please our neighbors for their good, to build them up.*

There's an old Jewish story about a famous rabbi who once visited the home of a rich man. The rich man prepared a wonderful meal for his special guest. The banquet table was filled with all sorts of fine food. Now, the rabbi, was in the habit of washing his hands thoroughly before eating anything. Sometimes the ceremonial washing of hands could take several minutes. This time, however, the rabbi poured only a few tiny drops of water from the rich ' man's pitcher onto his hands.

"Rabbi," the rich man said. "I don't understand. You used so little water, certainly not enough to get your hands clean. The pitcher is full of water! Use as much as you like." He didn't speak. The rabbi just nodded toward a large window in the room. The rich man looked and saw that his little servant girl struggling up the hill from the well. She was bent down low, under a heavy piece of wood, which was being balanced on her shoulders. From each end of the wooden bar hung a heavy bucket of water. "How could I wash my hands at the expense of that poor girl?" the rabbi asked his host. "Perhaps the water I saved will prevent one trip to the well for her." The rabbi knew the meaning of compassion. If the rich man hadn't said anything, no one would have even known of the rabbi's act of compassion. But God would have seen it, of course.

In his ministry, Jesus was the example of how to serve. In **John 13:3-5 (NKJV)**, "*Jesus ...rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself. ⁵ After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded.* He washed the feet of his own disciples. Jesus was not too important to serve. Neither are we.

As Christians, we are to use the gifts and talents God gave to us. *For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, ⁵ so we,*

being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. ⁶ *Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them...* (**Romans 12:4-6**, NKJV). The spiritual gifts, callings, ministries, and love of God within each of us...is for others. Even if we have an enemy, we are to treat them with compassion and serve their needs. *"If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head."* (**Romans 12:20**, NKJV)

In life, if we observe those around us, we will usually find an opportunity to help a brother or sister with greater needs than our own. We are on this journey together. God has allowed us to live in this place and in this time. While our helpful actions may not be big or noticeable, they are needed. So, let us follow the example of Jesus by serving others.

So, GIVE - even if they never say "Thanks."

LOVE – even if it is not returned.

SERVE – even if no one notices.

DO YOU WANT TO GO DEEPER?

REFLECTION/DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: Think of time when a person unexpectedly helped you. (example: at school, on the job, while you were in trouble, etc). Do you remember how their kindness affected you? Name a strength or gifting God gave you. Who can you serve today?

PRAY: "Lord, lead me to a person in need and help me to serve them."

MORE SCRIPTURES: James 1:27; I Timothy 6:2; James 2:15-16; Galatians 5:13; Deuteronomy 15:7-8

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