

The Blessed!

1 Timothy 6:17-19

June 26, 2021

Paula and I had a road trip for about three weeks and visited National Parks. We visited Yellowstone, Grand Teton and Bryce Canyon. Not only did we stay in the national parks but also in several different campgrounds. Some of them were free sites on public lands. They are called BLM – the Bureau of Land Management. We had a wonderful time.

While we were camping at one of these BLMs in Utah, called Kelly Island Campground, we met a man named Brian. Actually, we were camping right next to each other. The camp site was right by the river and it was an absolutely beautiful place. Interestingly, Brian had the same RV we have, which is called a Roadtrek. His was a newer model than ours and he made lots of improvement to his camper. So, we started to talk about our campers and little bit about our lives, too. We had a wonderful conversation. He was a retired electrician and telephone service man. He and his wife wanted to do RVing full-time when he retired. So, when he retired four years ago, Brian and his wife traveled together for a while. But unfortunately, his wife got sick and passed away seven months ago. Since then, he has been living/traveling alone in his RV full time.

Because his profession as an electrician and telephone service man, he had an extensive knowledge about electricity and communications. As a fulltime RVer, he had a tremendous knowledge about what fulltime RVers need to know. So, Paula and I learned a lot from him. He was so generous with his knowledge and time. He just wanted to share with us all the knowledge he had. We spent several hours with him and every minute was precious to us.

As Paula and I were spending time with him, I thought of the passage we have just read. It says, “As for those who are rich, command them...to do good, to be rich in good works, generous and ready to share.”¹

Brian was rich in knowledge and he was generous in sharing what he knew. He was eager to show us how to check certain things in our RV, some things I did not

¹ 1Timothy 6:17-18.

know. He was very helpful, and at the same time very encouraging.

I hope we live our lives with the same value and life style – being helpful and generous in sharing our knowledge, experience and encouragement.

In his book, “When Bad Things Happen to Good People,” Rabbi Harold Kushner discusses about his own experience of losing his son, Aaron. The whole book is a sort of the confession of faith, which included his doubts, questions and struggles. Aaron had a very rare disease called Perogia, a rapid aging disease. He would never grow taller than three feet in height and would eventually die in his teens. In fact, he did die in his teens.

Although Aaron was a fine young man with a very strong faith, he hasn’t had much chance to influence other people. He was just a sick little child. However, in Kushner’s other book, “Living a Life That Matters,” Rabbi Kushner shares about how Aaron touched his friends’ lives.

When Aaron became a teenager, he knew he would not live very long but he had such a positive attitude toward life and death. He often shared his thoughts on death and the value of life, which affected many of his friends in a very positive way.

According to Kushner, he learned that more than half of Aaron’s classmates identified Aaron as either the most influential person in their lives or the most unforgettable person they have ever met. Don’t you think those young people are truly blessed that they had met a person at their young age that made a lasting impact in their lives?

I am sure Aaron suffered a lot, but he was blessed to have such a faith that made a lasting impact in others.

When our lives are surrendered to the Lord, not only we experience God’s blessings in our lives but our lives also become a blessing to others.

While attending church every week is important, attending church every week doesn’t makes us to be true followers of Christ. Encountering Christ and obeying Christ is what makes us true followers of Christ. The reason for that is when we follow Christ and obey him, our values, allegiance, interests, and worldviews change

from being self-centered to being God-centered.

Sometime ago, Reader's Digest had an article entitled, "Heroes for Today." It was about a man named Don Bucher. Don was a farmer with several large farms. In 1992, his wife suffered a terrible disease, a terminal illness, and Don spent most of his time taking care of her. He could not take care of the farms, but his friends came to help. Through his friends' help and his workers' dedication, even in that year, he had a very abundant harvest.

Unfortunately, even with all the efforts, his wife died. It was the hardest year for him. Yet her death became a sort of turning point for his life. He has been attending church all his life but his wife's death really made him re-examine his life's focus.

His values and interests changed from his and his family's well being to something greater. While he was reading Isaiah 58:6-9, in which God said he wanted justice, freedom from bondage, feeding of the hungry, giving shelter to the wanderers, clothing the naked, Don realized what God really wanted from his life. God wanted to him share what he had with those who did not have much.

Don had an abundant harvest and great blessings, and he wanted to share that with the poor. So, he gathered some of his farmer friends to contribute to his cause. Together they sent tons and tons of wheat and beans to Moldova and Belarus, countries in Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union.

In each 50-pound-bag, he put the names of the family that contributed the crop, their address and a short message of God's love which cause them to do this. He wanted the recipients to know that what they received is not a government hand-out but a gift from one family to another family in Christ. It shared a strong message that the people of another country sent all these because they simply wanted to share Christ's love with them. The recipients learned about God's love from the people they haven't even met.

When we encounter Christ and obey him, our focus changes, our interest changes, and our life's value changes. The people like Don and his friends are truly the Blessed.

There is true joy and thankfulness that come from our hearts when we know we are blessed. In his book, Managing to Have Fun, Matt Weinstein shares a story of his friend Dale Larson, a clinical psychologist. One day Matt and Dale jogged together, and all of sudden, Dale took out some coins from his pocket and threw over his shoulder. After a while he did that again.

So, Matt asked, “Hey, what are you doing? Why are you throwing money away?” Dale laughed and explained that there was a psychological research called The Good Samaritan Study.

Do you remember the public phone, the one where we had to use coins? According to that study most of people, if not all, check coin return slot after they have used the phone. Have you ever done that? Psychologist used that behavior for their research.

One day they put some coins in the coin return slot and observed people’s behavior. They also hired a young woman to walk in front of the phone booth carrying several books and fake a stumble and drop the books.

The result was astonishing. People who found coins in the slot were four times more likely to help the young woman pick up the books than the ones who did not. The conclusion of the study was that if you feel good, you are more likely to be nice to others and do kind things to others.

That is why Dale was throwing the money away. He wished that the people who found the money would do nice things to others and feel good about themselves. Because good feelings can transfer to other people.

Think about your own life. I am sure most of you feel that you are better and more blessed than you deserve, and that is wonderful. I know you are already very generous in your own life. You have demonstrated that numerous times over the years. However, reminding ourselves how blessed we are can make us even more joyous and generous than we have been.

When we feel good, we become nice to others. That is natural, and that is what we need in our lives and in our society. So, let us remind ourselves how blessed we really are! Because we truly are!