



Weekly Devotion

Weekly Devotion for July 1

Seeking the Lord in the Face of Those Around Us

by Darwin VanderWal

And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.' — **Matthew 25:40**

(Please read Matthew 25:34-40)

A three-week mission trip to India ended with a week in Calcutta as volunteers at the Sisters of Mercy Home for Men. As we walked through the gate each morning, a statue of Christ, arms open wide in blessing, hung above the entrance. Our task: to help care for 100+ destitute men who were near the end of life. We washed floors, changed bedding, shaved their faces, and sought to be the presence of Christ for a few days of their life.

After two days of menial tasks, I longed for a more personal contact with the men. "Lord, may I have an opportunity to shave them?" I prayed. Alas, that task was given to the volunteers who arrived earlier than we did. Disappointment took hold of my spirit. Then, on our final day to serve, the opportunity came. My heart rejoiced! "Thank you, Lord!" I quickly gathered some supplies, made eye contact with one of the men nearby, and began to shave him. As I worked, I remembered these verses from Matthew and this statement of Mother Teresa: "Seeking the face of God in everything, everyone, all the time, and his hand in every happening...and in the distressing face of the poor" (*In the Heart of the World*).

As I shaved the men, I sensed the presence of the Lord in them. After shaving four men, my razor was becoming dull, but one more man was before me. As I began to shave him, I saw a trickle of blood appear and realized that I had nicked him. In shock, I thought, "No. I've caused my Lord to bleed! I'm so sorry! Please forgive me!" That moment touched me deeply. Suddenly, I was overwhelmed with guilt for causing this man to bleed. I felt the weight of all my sins that had made Jesus' death necessary.

Now, some 30 years later, I have a new perspective. Rather than focus on my sin and failure, the Lord reminded me that His focus is on His forgiveness for my sin and making me like Him, and that's where my focus must be. That truth made it much easier to focus on the presence of Christ in the people I meet and seek to be the presence of Christ in their lives. I admit there are moments of distraction in that effort. But the goal remains: to be persistent in discerning the presence of Christ in the disguise of those around me.

Lord, open my eyes and my heart to you in the people around me. Help me to love as you loved, to hear as you heard, to give as you gave. Amen.

Journaling:

What can you do to look for the presence of Christ in the everyday moments of life?

How can you be the presence of Christ to the people you meet today? Tomorrow? And beyond?

