

Weekly Devotion for September 30

Surprised by Generosity

by Darwin VanderWal

Please read Isaiah 58:6-7; II Corinthians 6:9-15

My home congregation had a long history of sending mission teams to a community just across the border in Reynosa, Mexico. The residents were destitute families who relocated to an area along a railroad track. The community consisted of a single row of ramshackle dwellings for seven miles. Each year, we would work with one of the pastors from this community by offering a weeklong Bible school for mothers and children and building a small casita for a family who needed it.

I participated in one of these trips and was surprised by a report from our construction team. As they were working on the home for a family, they noticed that one of the homes they had previously built was being moved piece by piece to a new location. Suddenly, one of them recognized it as the home they had built for one of the pastors who was living in and serving this community. The team was shocked. They thought, “How can he do that? We gave that house to him! He can’t give it away!”

Then, after thinking about it, came the realization that any claim upon a gift given is relinquished, and the recipient is free to use that gift in whatever way they see fit.

Here is the back story. The pastor had kept his old house for extra space. Then a family moved to the community without any means to provide a house for themselves. The pastor was moved by the Lord to give his new home to this family so they would have a safe and secure place to live. Since the pastor still had a home to use, he gave his extra “new” home to someone who needed it more.

Instead of being upset with this pastor for his generosity, our team was overwhelmed by his generous example and felt joy in being part of the community in an unexpected way.

Journaling:

How have you been on the receiving end of generosity at a time of need in your life? How did you respond to it?

How have you or might you be on the giving end of generosity to others in need? How does that strengthen your love for your neighbor and the Lord?

Prayer:

Thank you, Lord, for those who have generously and surprisingly provided for my needs. Help me to see a need and respond with a generous heart from the resources you have graciously provided. Amen