



Your Best Yes – Week 3

Welcome to the third week of a series we are calling "Your Best Yes." Again you can catch up with any of the messages you missed by going to our website.

Last week we talked about loving God by trusting him. To really love God is to trust God. Today we want to look at a simple way we can grow in our love for people over the holidays. To help us with them we are going to look at a passage from Luke's Gospel, which we began to look at last Sunday.

These readings are the traditional ones for Advent. Luke introduces us to John the Baptist. John was a cousin of Jesus who had been chosen by God to be a preacher and prophet. John was rather like a rock star. Huge crowds of people were attracted to him to hear him speak and when they did they were moved to repentance and, subsequently, baptism.

Their change in thinking and change of heart led them to reexamine their behavior. So, they ask, obviously enough, **What should we do? Luke 3.10** His answer probably disarmed many of his listeners, for its simplicity.

He says, **Whoever has two cloaks should share with the person who has none. And whoever has food should do likewise. Luke 3.11**

His profound prophetic instruction is basically the same encouragement I would give to any young child: **share**. Simply share what you have. If you have extra... If you have more than you need... Share with those who have less than you. Share with those who don't have anything at all. We see it clearly when it comes to children, but sometimes as adults we forget. Sharing is a basic component of nature and creation. In fact, the whole process of creation, the way in which it was *made to work* relies on the concept of sharing.

It is how God formed creation to grow and go, from flowers and fruit to bees and babies - they are all the product of sharing. That's how it was meant to be, but as with many things sin obscures and confuses this process. We misunderstand the idea or we simply forget; besides the fact that sometimes we just don't want to do it. I know I have had a lot of experiences in my life when it comes to sharing.

My sharing with my brother and sisters; my life with the friars, working among the poor in Delaware; Seeing the homeless in NYC with the sign "I'm hungry - will work for food." To the person who wants to wash your windows with a dirty rag and dirty water when your car is stopped at a red light for some spare change. There were times I would go down a different street just to avoid the hassle with the window washers.

Often times we just stifle the thought of sharing and giving, it's so ingrained in us to hold onto stuff instead. That's why it's really a spiritual issue that is part of the process of repentance John talked about. - changing our thinking, to change our feeling, to change our behavior.

A basic way in which we love one another is by sharing. The Christmas season is above all the *season* of sharing. And sometimes it is most compelling when its done for people we don't even know, people who can never repay us or even thank us.

Every year at Christmas we try as a parish to undertake a communal project of giving and sharing. Our giving tree is a great example of that – our outreach to the poor and needy of New Lisbon and SVDP.

The crowds asked him – **"What should we do?"** And the tax collectors asked him - **Teacher, what should we do?"** And even soldiers asked him- **What is it that we should do?"** This evening/morning we ask - **What should we do?**

Try this. Resist sarcasm. It is the antithesis of mercy. Pare down your possessions and share with the needy. Call someone you know who is lonely. Take time in prayer to think of the good qualities of someone you dislike. Hold your tongue. Do something kind and helpful to someone you don't get along with. Be generous enough to allow others to help you. People need to feel needed.

Those are just for starters. I'm sure all of us can think of others. The point of this is to answer the question. What can we do? If you think about it, we don't really need Jesus to tell us to share. We don't need the Lord to tell us not to hoard our things and our money. We don't need the Son of God to tell us to stop cheating one another.

What we need is a Savior--someone to change everything in this life and the life to come. The people asked John the Baptist: "What should we do?" That was the burning question 2000 years ago. It's the burning question this evening/morning. That burning question has a burning answer. We are all seeking to answer that question. It is Christ and uniting yourself to his grace that we can give our very best Yes to God. Invite the grace and truth of Christ into your busyness.

Choose to give God your best yes.