

June 29, 2014
Sermon for Third Sunday after Pentecost
St Peter Lutheran Church
Bowie TX
Larry Knobloch, Pastor
Matthew 10:34-42, (ESV)

J.J.- Jesu Juva—Help me, Jesus

Matthew 10:34–42 (ESV)

³⁴ “Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. ³⁵ For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. ³⁶ And a person’s enemies will be those of his own household. ³⁷ Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. ³⁸ And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. ³⁹ Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. ⁴⁰ “Whoever receives you receives me, and whoever receives me receives him who sent me. ⁴¹ The one who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet’s reward, and the one who receives a righteous person because he is a righteous person will receive a righteous person’s reward. ⁴² And whoever gives one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple, truly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward.”

Grace, mercy and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

Amen.

A cup of cold water. I guess now a days we would say a bottle of cold water if we're out and about. But even still, how often do we think about it and it's value. If you put in a hard day at the hay patch, loading and unloading square bails then your mind is all about the water. Coke or Dr. Peppers don't cut it, cool, clear water is what we look for.

I can remember numerous times that we would share Grandpa's water jug while we were hauling hay. My Grandmother gave me that old water jug about six years ago. It's not the earliest one that I remember, but I remember using this one many times too and I know that it probably still has the germs of my brothers and cousins because we all shared it at one time or another.

We wouldn't have made those hot summer days without swapping drinks (and spit) out of this old water jug. Grandpa made sure that we all drank between loads too, whether we didn't think we needed to or not. I also remember my brother not drinking enough and getting hear stroke one year too. That water was very important and we all learned a lesson that day. Even when think you don't need that cold water, that's when you need it the most.

That goes for other things too.

In today's text, Jesus puts great emphasis on this small act.

This seemingly trivial act represents something that is very important to the nature of a Christian because **it is** very important to the nature of Christ – the attitude of servant-hood. Jesus said that the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many.

It's important that Jesus speaks of giving to one of these little ones. Notice how generic the recipient of the action is. Jesus doesn't talk about doing something for the city, He doesn't talk about doing something for a worthy charity, He doesn't even talk about doing something for someone of notable status. He simply says one of these "little ones".

But which one? Well anyone. Jesus is trying to get our attention focused on some of the people who are often overlooked. He is also saying that everyone is important. Which is more important working on a telethon to help Jerry's kids or cutting the grass for the neighbor who hurt his back last week? Which is more important sitting on the governor's action committee to reduce crime in the inner city or teaching first grade Sunday school?

Do you see my point? We like to do important things but we don't always know what's important. We tend to think that if one is good ten is better. Don't get me wrong. There are important, high profile things that need to be done. But there are also important, low profile things that need, just as much, to be done.

Jesus doesn't discriminate between acts of Christian service. Jesus isn't more pleased with the crusader against crime than He is with the person who

cooks a meal for a shut-in. You don't have to save the world to get Jesus' attention. Acts of Christian love on any scale set off all the bells and whistles in Heaven.

What acts of love does today's text tell us are important? Jesus talks about a cup of water. That cup of water can be the smallest of gifts or the largest of gifts. A cup of water given to someone who is hot and tired and thirsty is a gift of refreshment. A cup of water given to someone who is dying of thirst is a heaven sent blessing that keeps life in the body. Either way, when done as an act of Christian love, it's important.

Also important is the fact that Jesus used water for His example. Next to oxygen, water is the most important ingredient for maintaining life. The use of water as our example tells us to look to do things that are necessary. And, again, you don't have to think too big to find things that are necessary.

This, oh so important, cup of water that you give might be a hug and a shoulder to cry on at the funeral home. This cup of water might be volunteering at a crisis pregnancy center. This cup of water might be buying lunch for the man holding the sign that reads will work for food; or any of a million other acts of love that no one but the Lord sees. Because, remember, whether you think it's a big deal or not, no act of love is so small it escapes His attention. There are also cups of water that can have longer reaching results. When you share the Gospel with an unbeliever, you are offering a cup of life giving water with eternal value.

The cup of water that you offer when you witness to an unbeliever isn't just ordinary water that refreshes the body. No. This is the life-giving water that becomes a spring of living water that wells up in the soul. This is the water that Jesus offered the Samaritan woman at the well. This is the water that quenches the thirst of the soul. This is the good news of Jesus Christ. What a wonderful cup of water to offer someone!

When you offer someone a cup of water, there are two ways to do it – room-temperature and cold. Both will quench a thirst, but there is a qualitative difference, isn't there? There is a difference between saying, "Have a cup of water" and "Have a cup of cold water."

Mind you, Jesus lived in a semi-arid region without benefit of refrigeration. In that place and at that time, there would have been a big difference between offering someone a cup of water and offering them a cup of cold water. To offer a cup of cold water would have meant that you went out of your way, you did something special, you went beyond just doing what was necessary.

What does this say about our acts of love, our cups of water, that we are giving to any one of these little ones? It says that no matter what you are doing, or whom you are doing it for, you dare not, you dare not, you dare not do the bare minimum. Jesus does not say to give a cup of water, but a cup of cold water.

When you perform acts of Christian love, you are not an independent agent, you're an ambassador of the King. If you did something for your country that was so important that you attracted the attention of the President, would you expect him to take you to M^cDonald's or throw a formal dinner at the White House?

Folks, when we serve others out of Christian love, we must offer up our best. People must see that this is not as the world gives. They must see that what they have received is a product of the love of Jesus Christ. That means that our cup of water must be cold.

How does that translate into the real world? Love is a tangible thing. It can be felt. Not with the fingers, but with the heart. Our acts of Christian love, our cups of cold water, can't be just mechanical responses to a need. They must be heartfelt acts of servitude performed as the visible hands and feet of Jesus on earth. They must overflow from the love that we have received so that others can see Jesus in us and praise him. They must show that we are only giving from what we have been given so they begin to want what we have.

Because, we have what we have only because it was given to us, and that brings us to the last point – giving. When we serve and when we give it is only an overflow of our gifts from God. Nothing really belongs to us. Oh, we sometimes like to think that we have earned our own way but, in reality, we only have what God has given us the ability to have.

It's God who provided you with the talent, the education, and the opportunities to be where you are. If you're a carpenter, it's God who gave you the love of craftsmanship. If you're an artist, it's God who gave you the ability to see the picture in your head before you begin painting it. If you're alive, it's God who gives you the very life you are now enjoying.

Am I making my point? When you give someone a cup of cold water, whether that's your money, your talent, your skill, your time, or even your love and compassion, you are only giving away something that doesn't belong to you anyway. You're only giving away something that you wouldn't have if it wasn't given to you in the first place. The cup of cold water that you offer isn't your cold water – it's Christ's, bought and paid for on the cross.

When Jesus died for this world, He became the headwaters of an inexhaustible river of life. A river of living water. A river of living, cold water. Water so cold that it can quench the fires of hell. Water so abundant that it's not just for you and me, it's for everyone. And, since it is for everyone, we stand and we offer the world a cup of water. Not water that we have earned, but water that has been given to us. Not just room-temperature water, but cold water. And we offer it to everyone we meet, right down to one of these little ones.

The forgiveness that is yours in Christ, is also given for them too. Enjoy the life giving, cold water, and then pass it on.

Amen.

The peace of God which passes all understanding, keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus!

Amen.

Sermon Outline

Giving in Jesus Name Matthew 10:34-42

- I. One of these little ones.
- II. A cup of water.
- III. Cold.
- IV. Given