

pray . fast . give .



Living Lent | Day 31

Are the Children My Neighbor?

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself."

Matthew 22:37-39: NIV

Encouragement for the Lenten Journey:

In Dr. Seuss' *Horton Hears a Who*, Horton faces ridicule from his friends when he tells them he hears voices coming from a speck of dust. Thanks to his keen sense of hearing and his willingness to listen, Horton detected the cries for help from the minuscule citizens of Whoville who were stranded. Despite the reactions of others, Horton realized he needed to help, concluding that "a person's a person no matter how small." Today's devotion reminds us that God often uses small people (children) to do great things. You are probably familiar with the scripture that talks about "out of the mouth of babes" (Psalms 8 and Matthew 21), meaning that young and inexperienced people can be remarkably wise.

Consider some of the children mentioned in the Bible: Mary giving birth to Jesus, Jesus teaching in the synagogue at age twelve, David facing off against Goliath, Miriam saving her brother Moses, and eight-year-old Josiah becoming king of Judah. We're sure you can think of others.

Today, we want to focus on the little servant girl of Naaman, the Syrian soldier. Her courage, humility, and concern for others can certainly teach us adults what it means to love your neighbor as yourself. Despite her circumstances, Naaman's servant showed love to her master and his family by

sharing the good news that there was a prophet in Samaria who could heal Naaman of his leprosy (2 Kings 5). How many of us would have remained quiet, content on watching our captor suffer? Yet, the servant courageously and selflessly shared her faith, and ultimately, her compassion led Naaman to faith in God and healing.

Lord, help us to be more like this servant girl. The Children of Morningstar are indeed our neighbors and God tells us to love them as ourselves. Help us not only to care but to act. Our participation in *Generosity through Giving* will demonstrate our love and our action may lead them and others to faith in God, just as the servant girl's action led to Naaman's salvation. We can't put a price tag on bringing a child or other person to saving grace! We pray through our Lenten journey that our prayers, sacrifice, and focus on our need for a Savior will also lead you to love your neighbor as yourself and that you will participate in truly being Generous.

One final word of wisdom from Horton the elephant, "Should I put this speck down? Horton thought with alarm. If I do, these small persons may come to great harm. I can't put it down. And I won't! After all, a person's a person, no matter how small."

Challenge to Prayer and the Exercise of the Privilege of Generosity

As you pray and sacrifice through fasting throughout this Lenten Journey, will you take this opportunity to pay forward in generosity a gift of at least \$1 per day throughout the 40 days for the Children? It is a privilege and a blessing to give as we all look forward to Easter and the Resurrection.

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Contributors

Lowell and Paula Mooney, Statesboro, Georgia, are accounting professors at Georgia Southern University. They are parents to a son (Christopher) who just finished graduate school and 2 married daughters Jessica (Matt) and Sarah (Andrew). Their love for children extends far beyond their own family, however, as outside the classroom, they look for ways to serve, add value to, and mentor college students, and now, it extends to the Children of Morningstar.

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