

THE POWER OF A GIFT – Revisited

We walked in to the restaurant to find our new friend who had been our server some weeks before. She smiled and greeted us politely then came over to the door to seat us at a table. However, we had not come to eat that day but to deliver a simple gift – a card and some chocolates along with a Merry Christmas hug. At first she did not seem to know what to do as she took the gift then she shocked us as tears began to trickle from her eyes and down her cheeks. Far away from home in a big city, struggling to learn English, working minimum wage to get by and someone brings a little gift which must have communicated “You are not forgotten.” “You are important.”

Another waitress, this one from Afghanistan met us at the entrance to Superstore. We had called and arranged this spur of the moment meeting in order to deliver a gingerbread house we had made for her to share with her children and grandchild. Her smile was broad and she as a Muslim woman gave us both big hugs which isn’t really culturally appropriate. She said “I really appreciate that you remembered me”. It seemed like that was more significant to her than the actual gingerbread house which probably appeared odd to someone from the Middle East.

A final example occurred on Christmas Eve when over one hundred folks took us up on our offer of turkey stew and fresh buns. It was a real eclectic group of people from over 15 nations representing different ages and socio-economic backgrounds. For some it was the first time to come into our church, others have been coming for years. It was most gratifying for me to hear the buzz of conversation happening around the tables and to have some come to the kitchen afterwards and express thankfulness for having a place to come for warm food and friendship during a season which otherwise has painful memories associated with it.

The power of a gift is remarkable. That should not surprise us because James 1:17 says “Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.”

Likewise recall that the Father sent the ultimate gift of His Son so many Christmases ago as mentioned in John 3:16 “ For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life”.

So let us heed the Father who encourages us to extend His gift of eternal life to others in word and deed every day of 2015.

Prayer and Praise:

1 – The cardiologist said that Marks heart condition is stable. Next November he is to have more tests and a repeat visit.

2 – We had a wonderful Christmas as a family, complete with Ethiopian food.

3 – The Christmas season has afforded many opportunities to share gifts and hospitality with many friends in the city. Last Sunday evening we were graced with a visit from the Chief Priest from the Sikh temple along with his wife, two sons and two daughters in law. I am sure they had not had many of the foods we shared but they were adventurous and gracious in their compliments.

4 – This Friday we will serve over 100 at street church downtown Eastside. Pray for new and deepening relationships.

5 – Pray for greater intentionality in my mentoring and community friendships.

BLESSED NEW YEAR TO YOU AND YOURS

Love in Christ

Mark and Catherine

