

God's Unexpected Gifts

The power of love and prayer

This TEDDY TALK series started four weeks ago. I titled the series "God's Unexpected Gifts" and somewhere between the beginning and last week I diverted from the plan. In fact, last week I wrote about Freezing Weather at the train tracks. For me, the good thing about my childhood home on the high plains was learning how to value God's creation and His Gifts in the midst of blizzards, torrential rains, and flying dirt. The snow and rains provided immediate beauty. Dust storms made of dirt and sand darkened the sunlight while passing through the Texas Panhandle on the way to Oklahoma and Kansas. I thank God for the gifts of good memories from all varieties of weather.

The gifts were truly presents from God. They were never as pleasant as the beauty I see in people. It is friends, family, and individuals we'll never know in war torn countries or fighting for life against famine and disease who are mentioned in our daily prayers. Prayers of love and faith are among the greatest gifts we can give to friends or loved ones. To extend those prayers to people we will never know should be just as joyous as the ones we can name in personal petitions to God.

Finding solitude in scripture from Lamentations when I typically shy away from writing about lamenting is difficult but rewarding. Fortunately for me, the Hebrew name of the book can be translated as "Alas!" or "How" each implying there is weeping over sad events. The alternative is found Chapter 3, verse 22 which reads, "*The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end.*" The words seem so positive in the face of turmoil in the lives of the Hebrew people. It seems that Praying for Others with Love is among the greatest gifts we can give to friends or loved ones. No matter the nature of concerns, we envelop our dear ones in thoughts of wisdom, peace, wholeness, and safety to find peace.

Focusing our attention on the power of divine love, we can discover the point of awareness within our heart that shows love in all people. A warm feeling arises in my heart as I immerse myself in the indwelling love of God. In essence, love is who we are, and we yield to the presence of divine love in every relationship and circumstance. Coupling our love with prayer for others brings peace into each of our hearts, minds, and spirits, and I'm grateful for that gift from God.

When I'm asked to pray for others, I look beyond the story of their lives. I find it important to be aware of the sacredness of the situation we are praying for and the person(s) we are praying with. I believe it is important our words go beyond the immediate situation and provide assurance in future days and weeks.

Prayer and love are sacred expressions of our sincere care for all people. We should be fearless when praying to God on behalf of the lives in His creation past and present. Bertie, my mom, prayed often. It was usually the same words... "Lord help us" and "Praise the Lord". I don't remember lengthy prayers from her. She always deferred to "her boys" at the dinner table for blessing the food. For seventeen years my brothers were told "...say the grace" at the table. Suddenly their 8-year-old "little brother" became a fearless prayer when the youngest of my three brothers departed to college.
... Lord help us!

Peace always

Ted