

It's the little things in life that count OR The personal touch!

Matthew 10:42 (See the underlined version below)

Grace, mercy and peace to you from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁴²And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of those little ones because he is my disciple, I tell you the truth, he will certainly not lose his reward.'

A glass of cold water given in the name of Jesus! What's so great about that? Where is the glamour and drama in this simple action? In our day you can get a drink of cold water in almost any public or private place from an impersonal tap, fountain, jug or glass. Nothing is cheaper than water, even ice-cold water! Who has the audacity to elevate the handing out of one of the common essentials of life by injecting a spiritual meaning into it?

Our very Lord, who built sermon parables around the lily, the sparrow, and the mustard seed, elevated the glass of cold water. In this glass of cold water he saw mirrored there the spirit of love, the depths of kindness, and the miracle, of human concern. Our Lord saw all of this in such a simple little thing. When offered in the spirit of love, even a glass of cold water becomes a bridge of human concern and a means of blessing.

Note, however, that the key to the blessing is the personal touch. We live in an often cold and depersonalised society. Some of our main mottoes are: 'Money is everything!' 'I do as I like, and don't you tell me what to do!' One of the slickest methods of modern procedure is, 'Let someone else do it for you.' We live out our lives in a highly impersonal society. Every day more and more human relations are put on a commercial basis. With so much business carried out on the Internet people often become mere numbers. Try ringing a large business organisation, and wait and wait until you actually speak to a real person. We are losing that personal concern and personal touch that mean so much.

There are certain values in life which are beyond the realm of commercial and business transactions. You cannot buy or sell human love and kindness. You cannot purchase deep personal friendship and understanding. Christian worship cannot be purchased at any price. Worship involves the free giving of self in adoration and praise of God. A person may give huge amounts of money for charity, and yet find that their own soul is wasting away for lack of meaningful participation in worship and praise of God.

When our dear Lord says, ***Whoever gives you a cup of cold water, because you belong to me, will by no means lose their reward,*** (John 9:41), he was hinting at the tremendous importance of the personal touch, the great value in personal concern for precious people. The method of our Lord is the personal method. God might have transmitted his 'good news' in Jesus by any means of his choosing. Consider, however, that he chose the personal touch, for he sent his only Son down to this sinful world to rescue us personally from our selfishness and self-centredness. The Gospel is the good news of what Jesus has personally done for us through his death and his glorious resurrection. It is the personal and loving presence of our dear Lord in the hearts and lives of his people.

Each of Jesus' disciples was trained through the personal touch of Jesus. Through his own personal touch our Lord brought healing and comfort and strength to those who were sick in mind and body. And he still does the same for us today! As you read the Gospel narratives you will be impressed by the personal and loving presence of Jesus on every page.

Looking further, we see that our Lord is personally present in the Lord's Supper, something special that we have been missing out on due to coronavirus. Even in this most sacred act of the Christian Church, the celebration of Holy Communion, it is the personal touch that counts. Here Jesus personally meets and feeds every individual who comes to the Lord's table with a penitent and sorry heart, and believes those precious words, "Take and eat my body, take and drink my blood, given and shed for you for the forgiveness of all your sins." Personality is basic, and nowhere is such importance attached to the personal Christ, as in the Sacraments of Holy Baptism and Holy Communion, where individuals meet our Lord personally, and where our Lord come to us in all his mercy and grace and forgiveness and love.

Living contacts, person to person love and concern, can and will change the course of people and society. Why do we still send missionaries out to every corner of the earth? Simply because people can accomplish what books, radio, television and all kinds of modern media cannot. It would be easier to flood the non-Christian world with great piles of Christian literature, and conduct a modern advertising campaign. However, the experience of the Church has demonstrated that nothing is as effective as a Christian living out his or her life on the mission field and that mission field is right here where we live! It is the personal touch that means everything to other people.

We must always remember the basic motive for personal Christian service. Jesus has clearly set the example for this. It is in the area of consistent Christian concern and love for our neighbour. Jesus' whole ministry was based so solidly upon this premise. His love and concern for people culminated with the total giving of his own self for all people, when he suffered and died for all the sins of every single person on the cross of Calvary. And his glorious resurrection together with the promise of our resurrection to live with him in eternal, glorious heaven, is all the motivation we need to exercise his love and concern for other precious people.

A philosopher once said that he could move the world with a lever, if he had a spot upon which to rest it. The Christian has a lever that is powerful enough to change the world. This lever is the power in personal Christian love and concern, a wonderful gift of the Holy Spirit, and flowing from Jesus himself.

May the lesson of the glass of cold water, given in the name of Jesus, teach us that it is the little things in life that count. Jesus said, "And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of those little ones because he is my disciple, I tell you the truth, he will certainly not lose his reward." **Amen.**

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.

Sermon by Pastor Graham Zweck
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