

I LIKE THE STORY ABOUT A SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER WHO WAS TEACHING HER CLASS ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF JESUS CHRIST DYING IN OUR PLACE FOR OUR SALVATION!

SHE STRESSED "OVER & OVER" THAT THE WAY TO HEAVEN IS THROUGH, JESUS CHRIST.
"IF I SOLD MY HOUSE & MY CAR - HAD A HI GARAGE SALE & GAVE ALL MY MONEY TO THE POOR WOULD I GET INTO HEAVEN?" THE CHILDREN RESPONDED:

SHE THEN ASKED, "IF I DECIDED TO SLEEP OUTSIDE IN A TENT WITH NO T.V. - NO CELL PHONE - NO WASHROOM - WOULD I GET INTO HEAVEN?"

AGAIN THE CHILDREN RESPONDED: "NO!!"
SHE ASKED, "SO HOW DO I GET INTO HEAVEN?"
BILLY YELLED OUT: "YOU GOT TO BE DEAD!"

DON'T WE JUST LOVE CHILDREN & THE
... BUT NOW I KNOW THAT WE LUTHERANS PRIDE OURSELVES IN THE FACT THAT WE ARE "SAVED BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH, WHICH IS A GIFT FROM GOD & NOT BY OUR DOING LEST ANYONE SHOULD BOAST!"

YES! MOST OF US DON'T LIKE WHEN SOMEONE BRAGS ABOUT ALL THEY DO FOR THE LORD! AND WE'VE BECOME CONDITIONED TO THINK THAT GREATNESS IN THE EYES OF THE LORD IS NOT SOMETHING THAT LUTHERANS ARE SUPPOSE TO DESIRE.

HOWEVER! JESUS NEVER SAID THAT WE SHOULD WANT TO BE GREAT!

WHAT **JESUS** DID SAY REDEFINED WHAT TO BE GREAT. **JESUS** IN OUR BIBLE READING TODAY SAID: "Whoever wishes to become great you must be your servant; and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. For Son of Man came not to be served but to give his life a ransom for many!"

NOW I THINK ALL OF US WANT OUR LIVES TO MATTER, AND **JESUS** IS SAYING THAT THE WAY TO GREATNESS & MAKING OUR LIVES MATTER IS SERVING OTHER PEOPLE!

ISN'T IT IRONICAL THAT **TRUE GREATNESS** DOESN'T COME THROUGH "TITLES" OR "POWER" OR "POSSESSIONS". IT COMES THROUGH SERVING OTHERS.

YOU SEE, **JESUS** KNEW THAT (TO VARYING DEGREES) WE ALL HAVE A BASIC INSTINCT TO BE GREAT. NOTICE THAT **JESUS** DID NOT CONDEMN THAT INSTINCT.

HE JUST WANTED US TO USE IT IN THE RIGHT MANNER. KARL ALBRECHT IS A GERMAN ENTREPRENEUR WHO FOUNDED THE DISCOUNT SUPERMARKET CHAIN ALDI'S. HE ONCE SAID, "If you're not serving your customer, you'd better be serving someone else."

I THINK THERE IS A REASON KARL ALBRECHT HAS DONE SO WELL. HE'S LEARNED THE GREAT SECRET OF **SERVING!**

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. SAID THAT EVERYONE CAN BECOME GREAT BECAUSE EVERYONE CAN BE ONE OF THE MOST VALUABLE LESSONS THAT GOD DIDN'T PUT US HERE

GOD PUT US HERE TO SERVE ONE ANOTHER. OBVIOUSLY THE BEST ILLUSTRATION OF THIS IS THAT TRUE GREATNESS COMES FROM SERVICE TO CHRIST HIMSELF!

CHRIST'S GREATNESS DID NOT COME FROM HIS WAS! IT CAME FROM HIS LIFE OF SERVICE TO BUT NOW WE MIGHT BE THINKING - DO WE SERVE? DO WE HAVE TO SELL EVERYTHING AND GIVE IT TO THE CHURCH? NO!!

YOU SEE, IF SOMEONE WAS TO ASK ME, "WHAT IS THE KEY TO SERVING OTHERS?" I WOULD SAY, "BE THERE." BEING THERE FOR PEOPLE IS SO INCREDIBLY IMPORTANT!

ESPECIALLY WHEN IT COMES TO OUR FAMILIES! "BE THERE!" THAT'S WHY I SAID, "SELLING EVERYTHING AND GIVING IT ALL TO THE CHURCH OR SLEEPING OUTSIDE IN A TENT WITH A WASHROOM COULD ACTUALLY BE VERY DETRIMENTAL."

WE NEED TO SHOW OUR FAMILIES OUR LOVE. THAT NO MATTER WHAT, WE WILL "BE THERE!"

I REMEMBER SOMEONE ONCE SAID, "DON'T ASK FOR OUR ABILITY OR INABILITY! GOD ASKS FOR OUR AVAILABILITY!" "BE THERE!"

I ALSO LIKE THE SAYING BY SOMEONE WHO NEVER CARES HOW MUCH WE KNOW UNTIL THEY KNOW HOW MUCH WE CARE! "BE THERE!"

MOTHER TERESA ONCE SAID: "NOT ALL OF US DO GREAT THINGS, BUT WE CAN DO SMALL THINGS GREATLY."

MOTHER TERESA BELIEVED THAT GREATNESS IS NOT IN "GRAND GESTURES" BUT IN ^{THE} SINCERE CARE WE INFUSE INTO EVEN THE SMALLEST ACT OF KINDNESS! MOTHER TERESA ALSO SAID WHEN ASKED WHAT SHE ANSWERED "GOD TO PROMOTE "WORLD" PEACE SHE ANSWERED "LOVE YOUR FAMILY"

IT HAS BEEN OVER 2,000 YEARS SINCE HIS SON INTO THE WORLD NOT TO BE SERVED BUT TO SERVE.

NOW GOD IS COUNTING ON US TO BE THERE FOR OTHERS; ESPECIALLY WHEN IT COMES TO OUR LOVED ONES. BE THERE FOR THEM. MANY TIMES THE GREATEST GIFT WE CAN GIVE THEM.

SO NOW AS WE CONTINUE OUR JOURNEY HERE ON EARTH TO OUR HOME IN HEAVEN, DO OUR FAMILY & LOVED ONES KNOW WE WILL BE THERE?

IF OUR ANSWER IS YES, THEN WE ARE LIVING THAT MATTERS, WE ARE ON OUR WAY TO GREATNESS.

...AMEN...