

## 5 Day Devotions, "Lent 4: Why Does God Need Me?" from Wednesday, March 20, 2024

### Day 1: Selfless Service Fosters True Community

In a world where individualism often takes precedence, the call to selfless service within a community stands as a beacon of hope and love. Reflecting on the experiences of those in seminary, it becomes clear that when individuals come together to meet each other's basic needs—be it through sharing food, clothing, or simply offering companionship—they are living out the Gospel in the most practical and profound ways. This form of service is not about recognition or repayment; it is about embodying the spirit of God's provision and love, where every act of kindness strengthens the bonds of community and reflects the divine love that holds all creation together.

"But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the just." (Luke 14:13-14 ESV)

Reflection: How can you practice selfless service within your community this week to reflect God's love?

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### Day 2: Lenten Growth Through Community

The Lenten journey, while personal, is not meant to be walked alone. It is a communal experience that calls for growth not only in oneself but also in the context of serving others. As individuals draw closer to God, they are encouraged to follow Jesus' example of simple acts of kindness—feeding the hungry, welcoming the stranger, and caring for the sick. These actions are not grand gestures but everyday moments of grace that weave the fabric of a caring community, reflecting Christ's love in tangible ways.

"And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near." (Hebrews 10:24-25 ESV)

Reflection: What is one act of kindness you can perform this week that will encourage spiritual growth in both yourself and your community?

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### Day 3: Divine Judgment and Human Need

The measure of a life well-lived in the eyes of God is not found in earthly success but in the response to human need. As Dr. William Barclay notes, it is the simple, uncalculating help given to others that God values. This perspective challenges believers to see every act of assistance as a service to Jesus himself, authenticating their faith through their willingness to help others. Recognizing the face of Christ in the least of these is not just an act of charity; it is an act of worship and a testament to the transformative power of the Gospel in daily life.

"For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me." (Matthew 25:35 ESV)

Reflection: In what ways can you respond to human need this week as if you were serving Jesus himself?

#### **Day 4: Compassion's Transformative Power**

The story of St. Francis of Assisi serves as a powerful example of how an encounter with the marginalized can lead to a life transformed by service. Just as St. Francis changed his path after meeting a leper, believers today are called to find Christ in the faces of those society often overlooks. These encounters with compassion are not just acts of kindness; they are moments where the kingdom of God breaks into the world, revealing the heart of the Gospel through the love and service of its followers.

"Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the straps of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke?" (Isaiah 58:6 ESV)

Reflection: Can you recall a moment when an act of compassion changed your perspective, and how can you embody that transformation in your interactions today?

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#### **Day 5: Sharing God's Grace with Joy**

As recipients of God's grace and generosity, believers are called to extend that same grace to others with joy and exuberance. The Gospel message is simple, and God's grace is freely given, not to be hoarded but to be shared with all. This sharing should be as natural and joyful as the playful puppies in the closing illustration of the sermon, reminding us that the good news of Jesus is meant to be lived out loud, in the open, and with a spirit of gladness that is contagious.

"Freely you have received; freely give." (Matthew 10:8b ESV)

Reflection: How can you share the joy of God's grace with someone in a tangible way this week?