

FRIDAY DEVOTION - GATEKEEPERS WORKCAMP 2017

Matthew 22:34-40: When the Pharisees heard that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, and one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. “Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?” He said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

It's Friday, and your work is almost done! There were probably times this week when you thought you would never get here, times you wondered if your crew would be able to make a real difference for the homeowner with whom you have worked, times you questioned if you have what it takes to do this work.

In our devotions this week, we have been inspired by Micah's call to assemble a life that is pleasing to God by seeking justice, treating others with kindness, and approaching our relationships with God and others with humility. God, Micah tells us, is not nearly as interested in having us perform religious rituals or follow the letter of the law as in seeing people's hearts transformed.

When Jesus was asked which is the most important law (the religious guidelines for the Jewish faith), his response was as simple, yet as challenging, as Micah's: Love God with your whole self, and love your neighbor as yourself. Easy, right? We all know that there's nothing easy about it! The kind of love Jesus was talking about takes hard work, putting aside our own concerns for the needs of another, and because we are imperfect, the grace of God. This kind of self-giving love encompasses all that Micah talked about—justice, kindness, and humility—and calls us to put them into practice by living a life of service and compassion for others.

It is incredible and humbling that God trusts us with the work of the Kingdom of God. Even with all our doubts and limitations God gives us the privilege and responsibility of meeting the needs of others and showing them the love of Christ. So, it is no accident that you were here this week. It was not by chance that you were placed in one another's lives or in the life of the homeowner with whom you worked. God called you here to help to change the lives of others, and, even though you may not fully realize how, you were changed, too.

*Reflect on what you and your crew have experienced and accomplished this week. What were your successes? Your challenges? What surprised you? How have you been a servant? How have you seen God at work? As you go into the weeks ahead, think and pray about your Gatekeepers experience. How might you use what you have learned this week to continue to love others by seeking justice, treating others with kindness, and walking humbly with God?

Pray that God will bless our efforts so that our community might be changed. Pray for our homeowners, that God will bless their homes, their families and their lives. Pray that God will give you the courage and the willingness to continue to love and serve others in order to meet their needs, improve life throughout our community, and change your heart as well.