

Micah 6:8 and Mark 12:41-44.

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Good morning.

One day during the summer Zachary said to me, “The scripture is not standing out to me. It is not saying anything special.” Now those are not his exact words but they express his intent. The Lectionary passages for today were just the same for me. Some thoughts came to mind but yet nothing jumped out. What had I gotten myself into by saying yes to Patty?

On my way with Zachary to Winnipeg a couple of weeks ago a Tim McGraw song came on the radio. It was a song that has touched my heart on more than one occasion. Then that feeling I was waiting for came. It is the same feeling that overtakes me when I hear “One Voice”.

The subject had been decided, being humble and kind.

What is it to be humble and kind?

Dictionary.com defines humble as:

1. not proud or arrogant; modest:

to be humble although successful.

2. having a feeling of insignificance, inferiority, subservience, etc.:

3. low in rank, importance, status, quality, etc.; lowly:

This definition is kind of a mixed bag. So, I like the not proud or arrogant, modest part. That part fits most people. But the definitions: feeling of inferiority, low in rank, do not really thrill me. Does that mean if you are humble you are insignificant?

Wow, maybe I am insignificant. I do not have high rank or social status. Nor do I have a high income. I stay home and raise children. Or maybe they raise me.

A number of people have said to me that teachers do not count for anything because those that can do....'Do' and those that can't do.... 'Teach'. Oh yeah and you get two months off in the summer, 10 days at Christmas, a week in February and another week at Easter.

Now you may be wondering if this is an exaggeration. It is not. This was something that was heard many times. Is this a real summary of teachers?

It most certainly is not. In conversation with my director of education as I prepared to retire he asked me about my career in education. I said that I was.... "just a teacher". Oh boy did I hear it about that comment. He said you are 'A teacher', not 'Just a teacher'. He was very emphatic about it.

Well then, what a way to retire and he had it right. Do not let someone else make you feel inferior.

It was the belief of helping others that keeps us, as teachers, going. Teachers and Tim McGraw agree that if kids would,

"Hold the door, say "please", say "thank you"  
Don't steal, don't cheat, and don't lie  
I know you got mountains to climb  
But always stay humble and kind."

That would be an accomplishment. And my favourite is getting them to say, “May I please” rather than “Can I”. I would say to them, “I know you can. The question is will I let you.” Sometimes providing a safe place and a breakfast was more important than ABC...1,2,3.

Colossians 3:12 (NIV) says:

“Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.”

Many of the teachers that I worked with were examples of this passage from Colossians. Does that mean it is ok to be humble?

Jesus was a teacher. Some might even say the best teacher. He taught so many things. Where to begin? How about His humility? Did he boast? Pound his chest? Say he was the greatest? You know I recall that he washed feet. Now that isn’t an appealing job in the days of dusty roads and sandals. But Jesus was teaching a very important lesson through a humble act.

Is it wrong to bend your back in service of others? We need to bend in order to lift others up. When you have lifted others, do you stand back in pride and let people know of your work? Or is it better to be humble and kind?

“Even in her lifetime, Mother Teresa was an icon of God’s tender mercy, radiating the light of God’s love to so many through the works of mercy, both material and spiritual. From heaven she continues to fulfil her mission as she “lights the light of those

in darkness on earth.” This was a statement made in support of Mother Teresa’s canonization, which took place on September 4, 2016.

Was Mother Teresa insignificant? Maybe she was an example of Ephesians 4:2 (NIV): Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Was Mother Teresa an example of the power of humility to motivate others?

There is so much in this world that is not humble and kind. Rather than dwell upon the bravado and negativity displayed by some athletes, entertainers and politicians let us look upon an Act of Random Kindness.

Rio Olympics 2016, 5,000 meter race:

“New Zealand’s Nikki Hamblin stopped to assist Abbey D’Agostino after the American athlete fell in agony. Earlier in their 5,000m race, D’Agostino had herself helped Hamblin to her feet after a fall that tripped them both.

Hamblin’s admirable compassion for her fellow athlete drew plaudits from around the world as the 28-year-old athlete gave up on a chance of a medal to help the stricken runner.

D’Agostino urged to Hamblin to continue racing but the English-born athlete refused to leave the American’s side until a wheelchair could be brought to take her away.

Now the IOC has decided to award both the New Zealander and the American the prestigious Pierre de Coubertin award. Otherwise known as the International Fair Play Trophy, the award has only been handed out 17 times in Olympic history.”

How about those who volunteer at Friendship Inn, at VBS, or working for a community garden? Maybe it was the person that held the door open for someone else. How do you feel as a parent when your child says thanks?

Not often recognized as significant are these Acts of Random Kindness. Yet they possess the power to change the world. In a movie entitled “Evan Almighty” a modern day Noah wants to change the world. Throughout the movie he thinks that God wants him to build an ark. In reality God was teaching him to be humble and kind. In the end he realizes that an act of random kindness or ARK is the key to making this world a better place. This is why a simple ‘thank you’ can mean so much.

It was true when the widow in Mark 12:41-44 put the pennies in the offering. There were others that gave more money. But what was the proportion of their wealth that they gave. What you give of yourself in the most difficult of situations may be one the greatest acts of kindness. Who was humbled in this situation? Who committed the greater act of kindness?

We have so much to offer. We have the opportunity to obtain and give so much, when others are struggling to stay alive. When we get to where we are going remember to turn. Look back to where you were. Others on the road may need your help.

Consider this concluding stanza from a poem written by Robert Frost called “The Road Not Taken”:

I shall be telling this with a sigh  
Somewhere ages and ages hence:  
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—  
I took the one less traveled by,  
And that has made all the difference.

What will your difference be?