

# Do a good deed today

By Elise L. Moore, C.S.

My mother and I were entering Food Lion when a gentleman lowered a grocery cart basket into position and offered it to us. "I haven't done my good deed for the day," he explained with a little smile.

We thanked him. But his few words and simple action profoundly touched me. What if each one of us did one good deed each day? What if we actively looked for opportunities to be kind to one another? What if we taught our children to do one good deed each day? What if we spoke openly about striving to do good deeds daily, as this gentleman did? I've been cherishing these thoughts ever since.

Christ Jesus told his disciples on the evening before his crucifixion how people would be able to discern his true followers, true Christians. "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if you have love one to another." (John 13:34,35)

How did Jesus love His disciples? He was patient, kind, firm, and he did many wonderful works, good deeds. Perhaps if we think of Christ Jesus as the model for action, we will be willing to look for opportunities to express love to one another.

Jesus called this a new commandment. What made it "new"? He had already taught his disciples the Golden Rule which is paraphrased, do unto others as you would have them do unto you. He had told them that the second most important commandment was, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." (Matthew 22:39) Why was the command to "love one another as I have loved you" considered a new commandment?

One reason may be that the Golden Rule and the second greatest commandment were given in the presence of the multitudes. The majority of listeners were interested to some degree in Jesus' spiritual guidance and counsel, but they had not yet committed themselves to following him on a daily basis.

The disciples had committed. They had dedicated their lives to following Christ. They earnestly endeavored to demonstrate Jesus' teachings and grow in their spiritual understanding and practice. But Jesus knew that one pitfall of Christians is putting the letter ahead of the spirit. The word of God without the spirit of love has as much warmth as moonlight.

So, he gave his sincere students a new commandment to keep the spirit of Christianity alive in their hearts. They would know a true Christian by the love he or she expressed to others. It was not the knowledge of the word but the spirit of love which would mark the Christian.

As we prepare for Christmas, perhaps we can adopt the practice of the gentleman in the grocery store and strive to do a good deed every day. Let us obey Jesus' command to love one another as he loved. The world will be blessed and know that we are disciples of Christ.

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