



MOMENTS OF JOY

A Message from the Quorum of Twelve Apostles

And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward

(Matthew 10:42)

Christmas is about Jesus Christ. It is about God's gift to all of mankind: ***For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life*** (John 3:16). As God gave the gift of Christ to all of us, regardless of the fact that we have done nothing to deserve it, He expects those who have accepted Christ to share His love with others in the same way.

In Matthew 10, Christ is instructing the Church in various duties and responsibilities and preparing them for things to come. Throughout the chapter, instructions relate to interaction with all who are contacted, whether they believe or don't believe, but starting in verse 40, He refers specifically to those who accept Christ. He is speaking to the Church about interaction with each other as members of the Body of Christ. In verse 42 He references "little ones," meaning His followers, those who were born again. On several occasions Christ reminds us that to have our names written in heaven and to be humble as a child, are great things in His eyes (Matthew 11:11; 18:4). We are His "little ones," regardless of position, and are equal in standing before Him no matter our responsibility or social standing. We are to serve each other, ***in the name of Christ***, whatever our callings, responsibilities or service may be.

So what does it mean to give a cup of cold water and why is this message to the Church so important at Christmas? Literally speaking, to give someone a cup of water, means you have quenched their thirst and provided hydration to sustain the body. Although that one cup of water will not last for long, it could provide life-giving sustenance, as well as, "a moment of joy." Figuratively speaking, any small act of kindness could provide "a moment of joy." Equating a cup of water to a kind deed means that Matthew 10:42 is telling us if we actively look for ways to bring joy to "these little ones" – even though their needs may seem small to us – Christ will be pleased, if they are performed ***in the name of Christ***. Truthfully, Christ has commissioned His followers to look for ways to give "moments of joy" every day of our lives – not just at Christmas.

It is important that we lift each other up, constantly, **in the name of Christ**. Here are a few ways we can give “moments of joy” to the “little ones:”

- The Servers

Take some time to think about those who serve you in your Missions, Branches, Areas, Regions and the General Church. Then, take some time to thank them for their service by telling them personally or by calling or sending a note. Are your children and young people taught and nurtured? Thank your Sunday School and Missionary Benevolent Association officers and teachers. Are the needs of the elderly and those in need cared for? Thank your Deacons and Deaconesses. Is your building maintained and cleaned? Thank your Trustees and other workers. Are your Sisters united in serving the missionary needs of the Church? Thank your Ladies’ Uplift Circle officers. Are you spiritually nourished and taught by your Ministry? Thank your Elders and Teachers. Are your services blessed with musical praise? Thank your singers and players. Is your Ministry organized and actively involved meeting the special needs of your Mission or Branch? Thank your Presiding Elder and his Counselors. Are you blessed by the General Church communications systems and committees? Thank those involved with those ministries. Are you blessed in attending General Church, Region and Area conferences, campouts, retreats and other activities? Thank those who diligently work to provide them for you. Are you uplifted by the work of the Missionary Committees? Pray for their efforts and thank them as they represent all of us in taking the Gospel to Israel and the world. It would be wonderful if each one of these could receive a “moment of joy” from all of us.

- The Needy

In every location of the Church there are those with needs. Some are very serious, such as lingering illness, terminal disease, mourning for personal losses of loved ones, shut-ins, emotional distress, broken homes, depression, financial difficulties, joblessness and hopelessness. All of these need on-going support for comfort, courage, spiritual instruction, and physical assistance. The care-givers need to be supported as much as those who need care. This is what the Church is for, to lift them up as we are able. No one person can do it all but it is important that all do some. A committee approach would be good, to solicit volunteers, create a visiting schedule, monitor who visits who and when so nobody is left out. It is the responsibility of all of us to give them “moments of joy,” **in the name of Christ**. Mostly to be there for them with visits, meals, donations, finances and other support as we are able. It seems that often the ones with the most need are the ones most neglected for some reason or the other. It can be sad, even depressing, to minister to the very needy. But God has called us to lift up our brothers and sisters, **in the name of Christ**. Let us not shirk our responsibilities.

- The Overlooked

Sometimes there are members of the Church, or regular visitors, that become “invisible” to us. They may miss meetings and nobody notices. They may not have family members and may be alone at holidays and nobody notices. They may carry heavy burdens that

are known only to them. They may not attend socials and other activities. These situations are not purposeful but they do exist. All of us should take responsibility to assess our congregations and try to engage those that are on the fringes. Everybody should try to make contact with every person that attends their services. Invite them to dinner. Find common likes and do something with them in addition to Church. A committee approach could help, as with visiting the needy, to make sure nobody is neglected. Christ understood that if we give them “moments of joy,” **in the name of Christ**, they will be lifted up. And so will you. Young people may be particularly affected by not feeling they fit in or belong. Senior Saints may also feel that they are not needed or wanted because of their age. The Church should not be hampered by these things. Everyone, both young and old, should make an effort to make sure all are included. There should never be “invisible” people in our congregations. May God bless us with wisdom to reach out to those who are overlooked.

It is easy to understand that by lifting up the Church **in the name of Christ** that all will be blessed. It is also easy to understand that by using this same principle to those outside of the Church they, too, will be blessed. Here are a few ways we can give “moments of joy” to the world:

- The Old

The aged are incredible resources of knowledge and experience. It is important that we not treat them as “old people” but respect them for what they have done and who they are. Don’t ignore them or feel they have nothing to offer. Try your best to engage them, and learn from them. Remember that someday, by God’s grace, we will all be old and will not be ready to stop interacting with others. Try to give them “moments of joy” by noticing them, smiling at them and engaging in conversation and finding a way to compliment them. Never pass up an opportunity to interact with them and lift them up **in the name of Christ**. Those who are disabled by Alzheimer’s or Dementia may not have the ability to comprehend what you are saying, or will not remember it in a few moments. Nevertheless, look at them, make eye contact and greet them with a warm smile. Offer words of encouragement, or engage them in other ways, and say “God bless you.” Yes, they may not understand your message and will probably forget your kindness in a few minutes, but it could give them a “moment of joy” in what may be an existence of isolation, silence and abandonment.

- The Young

Sometimes it may seem the young do not need, or want, attention from those who are older. Even though that may be true you can never be sure your contact with them is not needed. How sad it would be to miss an opportunity to lift up a young person who may feel small and insecure or unloved and forgotten. It would be better to risk making an unwanted contact than just ignoring them. Look for ways to lift them up. Try to appreciate where they are and what they are going through in these perilous times. Greet them with a smile. Compliment them in some way. Let them know you are happy to see

them. Thank them for being there and praise them for doing something good. When it is appropriate let them know you love them and that they are important to you. These things may seem insignificant and the young may not understand the depth of your love and concern but your actions could give them “moments of joy” in their otherwise complicated and unsettled lives. Always try to refresh them with a cup of cold water for their spirit.

- The Unlovely

One of the greatest challenges for most of us is making contact with the unlovely: those that are physically deformed, or mentally challenged, or unkempt and dirty, or with purposely marred bodies, or with unsavory or indecent apparel, or with foul mouths that are rude and dishonoring to God and everyone else. These, too, need cups of cold water. We need always to try, with all men and women, to make contact, **in the name of Christ**, to share with them a better way. All we can do is try. With a smile, a kind word, by offering compliments as possible, with any kind of support available to us and always with respect for their humanity and empathy for their situation. We will never know if one of them is desperately seeking love and acceptance. May God empower us to reach out to the unlovely as He reached out to us by giving His son Jesus Christ.

There is no doubt we could continue to enumerate ways to give each other, and the world, cups of cold water, but the important thing is to remember that whatever we say or do to show appreciation, **in the name of Christ**, will be a blessing, to those who lift up and to those who are lifted up. God is pleased when we follow the commandments of His beloved son Jesus Christ.

It is good to remember Christ taught us that when we give to others we are giving to Him: ***Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me (Matthew 25:35-40).***

May your efforts to give “moments of joy” to others be blessed.

In the Love of God,

The Quorum of Twelve Apostles

To learn more about *The Church of Jesus Christ*, with Headquarters in Monongahela, PA, please visit our web site. The World Operations Center for world-wide missionary efforts is in Greensburg, PA
www.thechurchofjesuschrist.com