

“The Water Basin”

July 1, 2017 King of Glory Lutheran Church

Matthew 10:40-42

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God's grace and peace to you this day through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen

A little bit of context. We are at the end of the end of chapter 10 in St. Matthew. This chapter has been all about discipleship. Jesus in chapter 10 commissions of the 12 disciples empowers them to cure the sick and drive out evil spirits. He sends them on their way to proclaim and in act the coming kingdom of God. He warns them about persecutions and trials for the gospel indeed will spark division. He tells them to take up their cross and then promises them rewards for faithfulness.

The whole chapter is finally not about what it takes to be a disciple, rather it's simply describing what it actually means to be a disciple. To follow Jesus is a life of empowerment through his Holy Spirit. That's an amazing feeling when we recognize his work in us. It's about welcome and rejection.

Discipleship is about persecution and being faithful. But it's also about recognizing the rewards that come along the way.

As you know this last week I was on the L2 F2 mission trip to Navajo nation in Utah. Navajo nation covers 300,000 acres of land on the borders of Utah and Arizona.

This text fell into my lap. Or rather I should say it was put on a table each morning.

The family that my group was sent to spend the week with was Allan and Elsie Graymountain (slide)

She came out right away the first day when we got out of the van to say Yaahteeh, which is hello in Navajo. We were able to

respond in kind and then she apologized that her English wasn't very good only that which she had picked up on the TV or the radio. To the contrary she was quite fluent and we had an easy time communicating.

We begin to get our bearings on the work that we needed to accomplish for the week. Elsie and Allan 67 and 74 respectively, begin to appear outside the house anticipating our needs.

What first appeared was a table. Elsie spent no less than 45 minutes trying to get every last speck of dirt off of that table that it might be clean for us to put our things on. Then there came the blue basin, a simple metal can slightly rusted at the top, and another large bucket of water. This she told us was for washing hands.

Every morning as we would arrive at 9 o'clock, the blue basin was already standing there.

Whoever welcomes you welcomes me. Elise knew how to welcome us. She wanted us to be able to wash our hands before lunch, and after using the caulking gun, and to get the paint off. And we were to later learn that both she and her husband were Christians. They were faithful followers of Jesus. In fact, she had even done some pastoring in their local Pentecostal church which was just over the hill.

Pictures - kids / working

Both Elsie and Allan would join us each day for lunch and devotions. So we got to know their stories and one another. On Wednesday Allan came out and asked if we wanted Navajo tea?

Hey soon returned with six red mugs. Imagine this if you would with me. The inside of their house was scarce. It was an old cement floor that had been painted over. Years ago. There were a couple nails for Allan to hang his ball caps on. They were maybe 10 pictures of relatives on the mantle. An old blanket covering in

even older couch. Nothing matched. There was no spigot in the bathroom sink so it acted as a counter holding other items. I don't share this to belittle them. Only to put in contrast the fact that he returned with six matching red marks. The best in the house. The china had come out.

Then there was the tea. He showed us the grasses with the tiny yellow flower at the top which he dried faithfully. And then cut into small pieces to put in his top of his coffee maker. Three times he would run the water through to make it just the right strength. Sugar was added and wala! Navajo tea.

Whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple - will be rewarded.

Those who follow Jesus, if they even give another just a cup of cold water they will be rewarded. Just a cup of tea. Just a basin of water for hand washing. Just a welcome - a cheery hello. Yaateeh!

You see in this part of the text, Jesus is not talking about the disciples actions, he is talking about whoever welcomes a disciple. Whoever welcomes a stranger.

We packed vans full of work supplies, we drove hundreds of miles and descended upon this community, 300+ Caucasians to follow Jesus. Yes it was hard working in the heat, it was no fun when people got sick. It took grit and determination to be up on those roofs driving in metal screws.

And in their community Navajo children who have been raised in a traditional way and yet choose to be Christian are sometimes ostracized from their own homes. Being a disciple causes division and strife among your brother and your father and your mother and your sister.

Following Jesus is hard work. But in this text Jesus is talking about those who welcome. In this text Jesus is saying that Elsie and Allan have received their reward with God.

Whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones... Even just a cup. It could be a red mug it could be the old one in the back of the cupboard.

Oh shoot, a cup of cold water isn't hard is it? That's pretty darn simple. Yet Jesus says even that small list of actions will be rewarded by God and have cosmic implications. There will be a ripple effect in heaven by just one cup of cold water.

A smile to a stranger? A prayer lifted up for the sick? A kind word offered to the man who repairs your car with a woman who cuts your hair. A visit to the hospital to your sick neighbor. Tying your children's shoes. Helping out at the food kitchen. Thanking a law enforcement official. Buying a few school supplies not for a student but for a teacher whose budget has been cut.

On the bulletin board as you walk in the church this morning, is a quote of Martin Luther. God doesn't need your good works, but your neighbor does. For whoever welcomes one, welcomes God Godself!

Jesus commissioned the disciples to go out and serve, bringing in God's kingdom. This morning, I want to commission you, in Jesus' name to bring the kingdom of God here and now. You don't need to get ready, you already are. You don't need a hammer and nails, or paint or special shoes, Jesus will give you what you need.

So I invite you to stand and I am going to pray over you.
Prayer of Commissioning
Amen!