



Rev. Dr. Raymond W. Boca

BISHOP'S DEVOTIONAL THOUGHTS

Selfless generosity

— Acts 9:36-42

In Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha (in Greek her name is Dorcas); she was always doing good and helping the poor. — Acts 9:36

When we recognize that every gift we have is from God's hand and not something we have earned or are entitled to, we become more open to sharing our time, talents, and possessions. As we are filled with God's grace, the natural response is to share generously with others.

Dorcas was known for her compassion for the poor in her community. She was known for doing good and investing in those who had needs. Her relationship with God was not just for herself but also for the benefit of others.

The death of Dorcas left her community in distress. Friends searched for Peter to see if there was something he could do. Widows showed him all the clothing Dorcas had made for them— gifts that reminded them of her love. Gifts placed in the hand of someone in need point to the hand of the heavenly Father, who loves us completely and generously supplies all that we need.

Many cultures tend to focus on accumulating wealth instead of giving to people in need. Dorcas, described as a disciple, was one who imitated the generosity of God. This kind of outreaching love and care is what distinguished the early church from its surrounding environment. Her actions did not embrace quid pro quo. Do you know what a quid pro quo mindset is? It means "I will do something for you that equals the value of what you do for me." Jesus has a dramatically different picture in mind when he talks about generosity and hospitality (Luke 14:13-14).

Two attitudes that are vital to Christian character are generosity and humility. Nurturing both in your life

helps guard against a destructive and blinding mindset that ignores the needs and circumstances of others around us. Something as ordinary as sharing a meal is an expression of respect and equality. It includes sharing not just our resources but also ourselves, and it speaks loudly to our values and commitments.

We are all recipients of God's grace and provision. We are all guests at his table, and God, our Host, is abundantly generous. Look for opportunities to be outrageously generous to people who least expect it and who are least able to reciprocate. A sign of humility involves wanting to help others when you would gain nothing from it.

As a grateful recipient of people's generosity, I have learned that giving freely and generously has more to do with our way of thinking than with having an abundance to give. Whether we share our time or donate our funds, the reward is in the giving. The giver experiences a sense of community as he/she shares with someone, imitating his/her Creator in doing so. He/she helps to refresh others, and in doing so he/she is refreshed. Doing what God uniquely designed us to do promises blessing for both giver and receiver.

Jesus provides the example of how to live our lives as generous givers. He gave his all, a living sacrifice (Romans 12:1). The Father rewarded him with the accomplishment of a kingdom being established, a church growing in grace, and individuals living with a purpose. If Jesus had withheld himself, we would have no future, no refreshment. Our blessings are entrusted to us for

Blessing others. In refreshing others, we too will be refreshed! Proverbs 11:25

How can you show God's generous heart to someone in need this week? SHALOM!