

Ordinary 13A - 2023

Simple Caring

For several weeks, Mrs. Sherman's first-grade class had waited for the field trip to the observatory. Notices had been sent home with instructions about the bus, lunch, and times of departure and return. To the students, waiting for the field trip was like waiting for Christmas.

Finally, the day arrived. We grabbed our lunches and coats and lined up for the bus. In the back of the room, one boy began to cry because he had forgotten to bring a lunch and would have to stay behind with another teacher. In a few minutes, the other children had contributed extra sandwiches, fruit, desserts, and drinks until the boy had a feast for his lunch. With new tears, this time tears of gratitude, he grabbed his coat, lined up, and climbed onto the bus.

We had given him a "cup of cold water." Acts of service are not always dramatic or earth-shattering. Simple caring is all that is needed. Discipleship means being alert for opportunities to care, to demonstrate God's loving-kindness, and to teach others to do the same. (by Gene Blair)

The opposite of how they've lived before

Driving in the UK, Ireland & South Africa is on the left side.

It can be unnerving to come down a small street and remember to stay to the left.

I was driving down a country road and had to think carefully about driving in a completely different manner.

In Romans 6:12-23, Paul exhorts Christians who say, "Yes, they're now living as they should," although it's the opposite of how they've lived before. Besides "breathing deeply" of the Spirit, they also need to concentrate upon how their new way of living is the opposite of their old one.

All You Have to Do Is Look Up

A substitute Sunday School teacher couldn't open the combination lock on the supply cabinet. So she went to the pastor for help. The pastor started turning the dial of the combination lock, stopped after the first two numbers, looked up serenely toward heaven, began moving his lips silently, turned to the final number, and opened the lock.

The teacher gasped, "I'm in awe of your faith, pastor." "Really," he said, "it's nothing. The number is on a piece of tape on the ceiling." I wish the answers to all of life's problems were on a piece of tape on the ceiling, don't you? Then, when we hit a difficult time in our life all we would have to do is look up. (by King Duncan from *The Idiot's Guide to Christianity*)

"Help yourself to a cool drink."

Some years ago, Sam Foss, a writer and traveler, came to a little rustic house in England situated at the top of a hill. Nearby was a signpost that read: "Help yourself to a cool drink." Not far away he found a spring of ice-cold water. Above the spring hung an old-fashioned gourd dipper, and on a bench nearby was a basket of summer apples and another sign inviting the passersby to help themselves.

Curious about the people who showed such hospitality to strangers, Foss knocked at the door. An elderly couple answered, and Foss asked them about the well and the apples. They explained that they were childless. Their little plot of ground yielded a scant living, but because they had a well with an abundance of cold water, they just wanted to share it with anyone who happened by. "We're too poor to give money to charity," said the husband, "but we thought that in this way we could do something for the folks who pass our way." [Donald E. and Vesta W. Mansell, *Sure As The Dawn* (Review & Herald Publishing Association, 1993).]

That's the kind of hospitality Christ had in mind. It's a simple thing, "a cup of cold water," but rarer than you might think.

Fr. Tony (<https://frtonyshomilies.com/>)