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Daily Devotional - Tuesday, October 29, 2024 - Clothed With Kindness

OCTOBER 29TH 2024 BY DEE LOFLIN

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In the winter of 1777–1778, George Washington’s army at Valley Forge was sick and starving. Chief Shenendoah of the Oneidas sent a gift of corn in support. An Oneida woman known as Polly Cooper also helped the soldiers with nutrition and medicine. Though she refused payment, she accepted the gift of a shawl from General Washington. Today the “Polly Cooper shawl” is one of the greatest treasures of the Oneida people.

Generosity, especially at the right time, is praiseworthy in God’s eyes. Faith, after all, must be accompanied by good deeds, or of what use is it (James 2:14–17)? In today’s parable, the Son of Man, as king and judge, separates true (sheep) from false believers (goats) (vv. 31–33; see also Matt. 13:24–30). What standard does He use? Practical service.

What distinguishes the sheep from the goats is simply what they *did* or *did not* do (vv. 34–36, 41–43). The good works mentioned are feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, welcoming strangers (that is, showing hospitality), clothing the naked, caring for the sick, and visiting the prisoner. The sheep showed compassion-in- action for the

needy; the goats did not. These six actions are examples, not a complete list. Each is still something we can do today.

Jesus was of course not saying that salvation is by works. We know that salvation is by grace through faith, with good deeds following afterwards (Eph. 2:8–10). The parable has a limited point and is not a complete doctrinal statement. The point is simply that a tree is known by its fruit (Matt. 7:17–20). Both groups act surprised so that the King can explain: Good deeds done in faith for a fellow believer are as significant as if they had been done for Christ Himself (vv. 40, 45).

Read about Dorcas (also called Tabitha) in Acts 9:36–42. What can we learn about clothing ourselves with kindness from her example?

Holy God, thank You for the reminder in today’s reading about feeding the hungry, showing hospitality, helping the poor, and visiting the prisoner. Equip us for the generous and selfless service for Your kingdom.

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