Blessed To Be A Blessing, Matthew 25:31-46 Sunday, Nov. 22, 2026

Once there was a little boy who wanted to meet God. He knew it would be a long trip to where God lived, so he packed a suitcase full of Twinkies and cans of root beer (his two favorite foods) and set off on his journey. He had only gone a few blocks when he passed an older woman, sitting on a park bench and just staring at some pigeons. She looked sad and lonely, so the boy went over and sat down next to her. He opened his suitcase, took out a package of the Twinkies and offered it to her.

She gratefully took it and smiled at him. Her smile was so warm and wonderful that the boy wanted to see it again, so he offered her a can of his root beer. Once again, she took it and smiled at him. The boy was delighted. They sat there all afternoon, eating the Twinkies, drinking the root beers and watching the pigeons, without saying a word to each other.

As it grew dark, the boy realized that he had better get started home and got up to leave. But before he had just a few steps, he turned around, ran back to the older woman and gave her a big hug. She gave him the biggest smile of all.

When the boy got home, his mother noticed how happy he seemed. So she asked him what he had done all day. **He told her*:***
"I had lunch with God. And you know what? She has the most beautiful smile that I've ever seen."

Meanwhile, the older woman had returned to her home. Her son also noticed how happy and contented she seemed, so he asked her what she had done that had made her so happy. **She said to him:**
"I sat in the park and ate Twinkies with God. You know, he's much younger than I expected."

What does God look like? Who does God resemble? And can you really see the face of God?

There have been on going stories about the appearance of the face of Jesus and the Virgin Mary in some of the oddest places.

In November of 2008, Fred Whan, of Kingston Ontario, with the help of his son, found the face of Jesus on a fish stick.

Earlier in 2004, Diana Duyser of Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, declared she had found an image of the Virgin Mary on her decade-old burnt grilled cheese sandwich. **She auctioned it off on eBay for $28,000.**

On the Internet, I found photos and stories of the ***"appearances of Jesus"*** in bathroom tile, bathroom stains & potato chips.

So, where do we find the face of Jesus? Where do we see the face of Christ the clearest.

The reading from Matthew 25 tells us…Matthew 25:31-46

[31] "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory.
[32] All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats,
[33] and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left.
[34] Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world;
[35] for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me,
[36] I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.'
[37] Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink?
[38] And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing?
[39] And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?'
[40] And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.'
[41] Then he will say to those at his left hand, 'You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels;
[42] for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink,
[43] I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick

and in prison and you did not visit me.'
[44] Then they also will answer, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?'
[45] Then he will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.'
[46] And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

Notice that it is the attitude of the people toward each other and others who are different or in need which determines whether they are sheep or goats. Do you treat everyone you meet like an old goat? Or do you treat them like the sheep of Jesus' flock?

You and I have been blessed beyond measure. We know the Good News.

WHY? We were created in the image of God. ***From the very beginning of time God has claimed us as his very own***. Even when we disobeyed and were rebellious, God sent His only Son to bring us back home. Through Jesus, God made the ultimate sacrifice and paid the ultimate price for our sakes. Through Jesus' death on the cross and resurrection from the grave, our sins have been forgiven and we have been given life eternal. Jesus promised to be with us always, and He is made manifest in our lives through the presence of God's Holy Spirit. And if that's not enough, we have been made joint heirs with Christ. We are the children of God, brothers and sisters with Jesus.

We know the Good News. It flows through our soul like blood flows through our body. We breathe it in with every breath we take. We have been blessed beyond measure and we're called to be a blessing for others simply by living like Christ. And by looking at the world and the people of the world through the eyes and heart of Jesus. If we can do that, then we will bless those around us and we will see the face of Christ, not in toast or tiles or doughnut holes but in the faces of each other.

We'll be enabled to see the face of Christ in our 'FAMILY' friends, and neighbors and even in the faces of strangers.

A. Next week we will celebrate Thanksgiving Day. **Most of us will gather with family and friends and share a huge meal of turkey and dressing and all the fixings**. And it will be a great time of fellowship. Oh, there will be the tension of family issues that have been put on the back burner. But still there will be laughter and stories and a jovial attitude. Everybody will get stuffed and then find a comfortable spot to let the Tryptophan work its magic and lull you into a nice little nap.

If your Thanksgiving needs some extra spice or needs to be livened up a little, Leonard sweet has a couple of suggestions. During the middle of the meal, turn to Mom and say, ***"See, Mom, I told you they wouldn't notice that the turkey was four months past its expiration date. You were worried about nothing."***

Or, when everyone starts sharing what they are thankful for, say, ***"I'm thankful I didn't get caught"*** and then refuse to say anything more.

B. Better yet, look at your family through the eyes of Christ. Treat each of them as if they were Jesus, the honored guest in your home, even if you're in someone else's home. Remember, they might only be family, but they too are a child of God. So, in a quiet moment, when no one is watching you, ***look at your family through the eyes of Jesus, and give thanks***. Do the same thing for each of your friends and neighbors. ***If you can LOOK at your family, friends and neighbors through the eyes and the heart of Jesus and you'll see the face of Christ.***

HOW ELSE CAN WE SEE THE "FACE OF CHRIST?"

We're called to look at strangers through the eyes and the heart of Jesus. Because you never know when Jesus might appear.

There is an Irish legend about a king, who had no children to succeed him on the throne. So, he had his messengers post signs in every town and village of his kingdom inviting qualified young men to apply for an interview with the king. This way the king hoped to be able to choose a successor before he died.

Two qualifications, especially, were stressed. ***#1: The person must have a deep love for God*** and ***#2: The person must have a deep love for his neighbor.***

A young man saw one of the signs. He indeed had a deep love for God and neighbor. He felt a kind of inner voice telling him to apply for an interview. But the young man was so poor that he didn't have decent clothes to wear to an interview. He also didn't have any money to buy provisions for the long journey to the king's castle.

So, the young man prayed over the matter. He finally decided to beg for the clothes and the provisions he needed. When everything was ready, he set out. After a month of travel, one day the young man caught sight of the king's castle. It sat high on a hill in the distance.

At about the same time, he also caught sight of a poor old beggar sitting by the side of the road. The beggar held out his hands and pleaded for help. "I'm hungry and cold," he said in a weak voice. "Could you give me something warm to wear and something nourishing to eat?"

The sight of the beggar moved the young man. He stripped off his warm outer clothes and exchanged them for the tattered old coat of the beggar. He also gave the beggar most of the provisions he had been carrying in his backpack for the return journey. Then, somewhat uncertainly, he walked on to the castle in tattered clothes and without enough food for his return trip.

When the young man arrived at the castle, guards met him at the gate. They took him to the visitors' area. After a long wait, the young man was led into see the king.

He bowed low before the throne. When he straightened up, the young man could hardly believe his eyes. **He said to the king. *"You were the beggar beside the road." "That's right,"* said the king. *"Why did you do this to me?"* asked the young man.**

The king said, *"I had to find out if you really did love God and neighbor."* And then the king told him he had proved himself and was the new heir. *What a surprise.*

In our lives we are given many a chance to live like Christ and see Him in the lives and faces of others. The question that Jesus asks us each day is: <u>Will We See the NEEDS of OTHERS AND ACT ON THEM?</u>

I saw a cartoon a long time ago that showed an old woman, sitting on a porch, reading the Bible. Two kids were walking by. One said to the other, ***"That's my grandma. She's cramming for her finals."***

A lot of people have the same attitude. But most of them are working on stuff that won't even be on the test***! It won't make any difference what you study, if you can't see the face of Jesus in family, friends and neighbors.***

And if you can't see the face of Jesus in the face of strangers, then it won't matter what you've learned. Or how much Bible trivia you know.

You know the Good News. ***YOU HAVE BEEN BLESSED TO BE A BLESSING TO OTHERS.*** All you really must know, is Him. All you really must do, is live like Him and share the blessings He has blessed you with.

Amen.