

Sunday, August 6, 2023

Scripture Reading: Matthew 14:13-21

It's much better to do good in a way that no one knows anything about it.
—Leo Tolstoy

In the closing days of 2022, the United States was hit with a historic blizzard that caused widespread power outages, more than 15,000 flight cancellations, icy roads, whiteouts, and deep snow. Do you remember that storm?

As residents and travelers struggled to cope, stories of generous hospitality, kindness, ingenuity and selfless acts of courage began to emerge. Here are a couple of those stories.

On Christmas Eve, Sha'Kyra Aughtry and her boyfriend Trent rescued Joe White, 64, a developmentally disabled man who got stuck in the frigid cold as he tried to get to work at a movie theater. Aughtry used a blow dryer to warm White's body, which was encased in ice. "I don't care about nothing else," she said. "This man is not about to die over here." Desperate to get White medical care, she posted about his condition on social media, and a group of strangers showed up to take him to the hospital, where he recovered from fourth-degree frostbite.

Another quick story: At the height of the blizzard, pastors Al and Vivian Robinson opened their Buffalo church, Spirit of Truth Urban Ministry, the only building in their area that had power, to 154 people who needed a warm place to sleep and eat. Fewer than five were members of their congregation. "Honestly, it was total strangers. We had Asian ... Hispanic ... Arabic speaking people ... Nigerians ... every possible minority," Pastor Al said. "I have this huge family now that ... we are ... trauma bonded through the storm and it's just beautiful."

These stories are examples of what Jesus calls the work of the righteous: "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, 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" (Matthew 25:35-36).

Thank God for all of the good Samaritans who rendered aid during those difficult times, and for the tens of thousands, perhaps like yourself, who prayed and even provided financial support to agencies struggling to offer assistance. The kindness demonstrated by so many during this catastrophic event reminds us that goodwill still prevails, and that love always wins.

—Adapted from Joanna Loucky-Ramsey, *The Wired Word*, thewiredword.com, January 8, 2023. Used by permission.

Prayer: O God, thank you for all of those in the world who every day stop what they are doing, and take time to help a person in distress. May they be blessed in so doing. Amen.

Daily Bible Readings

Sunday: James 3-5

Monday: Jeremiah 27-29

Tuesday: Jeremiah 30-32

Wednesday: Jeremiah 33-36

Thursday: Jeremiah 37-39

Friday: Jeremiah 40-42

Saturday: Psalms 88-90

VERSE TO REMEMBER

*Lord, you have been our dwelling place
in all generations. Before the mountains were brought
forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world,
from everlasting to everlasting you are God. —Psalm 90:1-2*

QUESTIONS

Question 1

What is it that was given to you, that still belongs to you, that you have never lent to anyone, but that is used by all the people you know?

Question 2

Can you write five odd figures that add up to 14? (Be careful! This is tricky.)

MAGIC SQUARES

DIRECTIONS: Fill in the grids, so that each column, diagonal and row add up to the given sum.

Given Sum: 15

2		
	5	3

Given Sum: 30

	10	6
12		

USE WHITE SPACE HERE TO MAKE MATH NOTES



Questions: 1. Your name; 2. $1+1+1+11=14$. We said "figures," not numbers!

2	9	4
7	5	3
6	1	8

4	18	8
14	10	6
12	2	16

MAGIC SQUARES