
Word of Life

July 2023

“Whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple - truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward”

(Mt 10:42).

The evangelist Matthew is a highly educated Christian scribe; he is thoroughly familiar with the promises of the God of Israel and for him Jesus' words and actions are their fulfilment. Therefore, in his Gospel he presents Jesus' teaching in the form of five great discourses, as if he is a new Moses.

This Word of Life concludes the 'missionary discourse' which begins with the choosing of the twelve apostles and explains what their preaching will involve. Jesus also speaks of the misunderstandings and persecutions they will encounter, which will require of them both credible witness and radical choices.

But there is more: Jesus reveals that the sending of the disciples has its roots in the mission he himself received from the Father. This is a belief that was found in the Old Testament: God himself is present and engaged in his messenger. Therefore, through the witness of Jesus and those he sends, the very love of God reaches every person.

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In addition to the specific mission of some people, namely the apostles, the pastors and the prophets, Jesus announces that every Christian can be his disciple and, at the same time, a recipient and bearer of this mission. As disciples, all of us, even if we are 'small' and apparently lacking special qualities or titles, can witness that God is near. It is the entire Christian community that the Father of all sends to humanity.

We have received attention, care, forgiveness and trust from God through the actions of our brothers and sisters. We can give something to others so that they can experience the Father's tenderness, as Jesus did during his mission. This is the root of the belief that, in the Father, there is the guarantee that so-called 'little things' can change the world. Even if this is only a glass of cold water.

‘It doesn't matter whether we can give much or little. What matters is how we give, how much love we put into even a small gesture that shows awareness of another person. Sometimes it is enough to offer them a glass of water, a glass of fresh water ... a simple gesture that is great in God's eyes if it is done in his name, that is, out of love. ... This month's Word of Life may help us to rediscover the value of everything we do:

from work in the house or fields to dealing with office paperwork and schoolwork and responsibilities in the civil, political and religious fields. Everything can be transformed into attentive and caring service. Love will give us new eyes to sense what others need and to approach them with creativity and generosity. What will the fruits be? Gifts will circulate because love calls for love. Joy will multiply because "there is more joy in giving than in receiving."¹

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What Jesus asks of us is very demanding: he is asking us not to stop the flow of God's love. He asks us to reach out with open hearts to every man and woman and offer concrete service, overcoming our prejudices and judgments.

He wants our active, creative and responsible cooperation for the common good, starting from the small things of every day, but at the same time he will not fail to reward us. He will always be at our side, to take care of us and accompany us in this mission.

'... I left my job in the Philippines and went to Australia to be with my family ... I found a job as a cleaner at a construction site. I had to take care of the dining rooms, locker rooms, offices and canteen that were used by more than 500 workers. It was a completely different job from the one I had before as an engineer ... Out of love for others, I made sure that the dining rooms were always clean and tidy. However, there are people who do not care about cleanliness I have not lost patience because it is an opportunity for me to love Jesus in each person I meet. Gradually, these people began to clean up after lunch and then over time we became friends and I began to gain trust and respect from them, ... I have seen that love is contagious and that anything that is done out of love remains.'²

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Edited by Letizia Magri and the Word of Life Team

Each month the Focolare chooses a Scripture passage as a guide and inspiration for daily living. The commentary, originally written by founder Chiara Lubich (1920–2008), is written by an international commission drawing inspiration from the Spirituality of Unity and, translated into 96 different languages, reaches several million people worldwide.

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1. Acts 20:35 as in C Lubich, Word of Life Oct 2006

2. Edited by S. Pellegrini, G. Salerno, M. Caporali, Famiglie in azione - Un mosaico di vita, Città Nuova 2022.