

Revelation #66 - Paying it Forward: being a good samaritan.

"Go and do likewise..." - Luke 10:38

Many of us remember the movie, Paying It Forward, with Kevin Spacey and a little boy who decides to do something good for someone even BEFORE it's been done to him, as part of a creative homework project for his 5th grade class. What starts out as "*one random act of kindness*" turns into a multiplication of blessing as others see the act and are so impacted that they start doing the same!

Most of us know the story of the Good Samaritan, but what do we know about who he is or where he comes from or why he chose to be nice to THIS man? In our day and age that is so sue-happy, there is even now a '*good samaritan*' law, to try and protect someone from being punished for trying to help someone in need! What a crazy world we live in!

We have a social law that tells us if someone does something for us, we owe them and should do something good back to them. Kind of a '*quid pro quo*' kind of thing. *You scratch my back I'll scratch yours*. It's what we call '*conditional*' love, more of a debt than a gift. It evens the score. If I do something for you then you OWE me!

Isn't it interesting that this story comes in the context of Jesus talking to a rich man who wants to be His disciple and who has 'done' all the right things, according to religious tradition. Jesus blows him out of the water with a story that goes so far beyond what was required or expected of even a '*good*' man!

In 2011, we had one of those amazing '*pay it forward*' kind of years! We had been doing RTF ministry about 5 years by then, and in that one year we had 21 Thorough ministries that were paid for by one person blessing another person out of their own gratitude to God. They paid for someone else to experience the same miracles of joy and freedom that they had experienced! In this case, it seems more like a '*pay it back*' kind of story, but the payment didn't go back to the one that healed them but FORWARD to the ones that God still wanted to heal! I think this is kind of how God's kingdom works!

It is always so amazing that when we give as He does, we activate HIS laws of sowing and reaping, and WE get blessed! IT seems that every time we GIVE, HE gives back in spades, multiplied and running over! Even when we aren't trying to get anything!! I think it so tickles His heart! And it is His greatest joy to bless us as His kids! The more we give, the MORE He multiplies the gift!! WOW!!

In the story of the Good Samaritan, He gives examples of 3 different characters and how they respond to the man in need. One is a religious zealot who wouldn't touch a 'sinner' with a ten-foot pole. Another one is just ruled by fear! And another man just sees a man in need, plain and simple, and treats him the way he would want to be treated. No pretensions, no judgments, no conditions. Only honesty, kindness, and generosity! And he doesn't just give the

minimum! He gives with abundance, and even sacrificially! What a shock this must have been to the legalist rich man he was sharing this story with! And then to top it off, Jesus said, "*Go and do likewise!*"

How many of us, if we were honest with ourselves, would not also be offended! The gall of Jesus to ask us to treat someone in such a way and without any guarantees of even being paid back for our effort or kindness! The response of the Good Samaritan is NOT the response of a normal man, but of one who has already been radically changed and altered by the goodness of God and the gift of Jesus forgiveness on the Cross! That is a debt too great to repay! Jesus says to '*Pay it forward*' to everyone He brings in our path, and HE will pay the bill!!

What a journey He has called us to walk on. And how will we respond? Have we experienced HIS abundant gift of healing offered to us in our brokenness? As a weary traveler ourselves, often beaten and broken on our journey, will we say 'NO' to His gentle offering of healing and kindness? Or will we choose to '*Pay it forward*' as HE did, dying for us while we were still in our sin, paying our debt even before we even knew we had a debt!

I hope you not only experience the joy of His kindness towards you, but also the joy of sharing kindness with those the world does not deem worthy of such kindness. The choice and the blessing are yours!