

Daily View

“But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called ‘today’” Hebrews 3:13



We noticed something different about the beggars in Prague when we were there two years ago – none of them would show their face. That suggests that they felt shame in being poor. Yet, Jesus said, “blessed are you poor...” (Luke 6:20)

“Do I give to the beggar?”

One of the enduring memories from my youth pictures my parents getting together supplies and groceries for a person who came to the church building looking for help. This occurred numerous times in my lifetime since my father was a preacher and, therefore, was the first to be approached by people in need. It was especially common when we lived in an apartment above the church building in Vallejo for a couple of years.

To my 12 year old self, dad was a hard-working, strict disciplinarian. (If you wondered why I’m such a perfect human being it’s because my dad kept me on the straight and narrow [*Insert huge laughing out loud emoji here*]). Dad was somewhat stern as he went about his business each day but when these people came by, he never hesitated to help. On the rare occasions that my brother and I needed some compassion, we went to mom, so it was good for us to see this compassionate side of our father.

Dad was always willing to help these people who knocked on our door or showed up at the building. He would call some of the members whom he knew he could rely on and they would pool their resources and put up one of these beggars in a hotel or gather up some groceries and buy them some gasoline. They didn’t do the easier thing, which would be to give them a wad of cash and bid them “adieu.”

Sadly, more often than not, the “beggars” turned out to be crooks who took advantage of people and then moved on to find some other “suckers.” On at least one occasion, the hotel room my dad and friends rented for a “family” was trashed and left with empty wine and beer bottles all over

the room. And yet, to my surprise, my dad and other members of the church would continue to help the next people who came along.

They may have debated the wisdom of doing that and the chance that they were enabling these people, but I don’t remember hearing any of that. There were no questionnaires and they never gave them “the third degree.” I guess they decided to give them the benefit of the doubt and help them and let God take care of judging them.

It’s hard to criticize that approach. Proverbs 14:21 says, “Whoever despises his neighbor is a sinner but blessed is he who is generous to the poor.”

And Jesus said, in Luke 6:30,

Give to everyone who begs from you, and from one who takes away your goods do not demand them back.

That’s really clear, but I’m amazed at how many “exceptions” I can come up with when actually confronted by one who “begs from me.” I have all those terms memorized that make me exempt from giving to the beggar: “co-opting”; “enabling”; “contributing to the delinquency.” Oh, and my favorite: “*If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat*” (II Thessalonians 3:8). But Jesus doesn’t seem to leave room for any of those exemptions.

In our society, it’s difficult to distinguish between the well-to-do “poor” and the truly poor, but if we just take Jesus at his word, we can’t go wrong.

My dad and — more importantly Jesus — taught me that I need to judge less and give more. I need to remember to take something to give a beggar every time I leave the house.

*Unless otherwise indicated the opinions expressed in this publication and images used are solely those of David Posey.
Email me at dpaulposey@mac.com or text me at (530) 558-5057