

Doing Stinky Jobs With Love 🤢🤢🤢

Inspired by Mark 12:28-34

One of the students came to the Catechist and asked him, "What is the first thing you would say if someone asked you to explain Christianity?" Gerald replied, "The first thing I would say is put God first. Love Him as much as He loves you. Love Him more than you love anyone or anything else. Secondly, I would say make sure that shows, so that even your neighbor knows that you love God most. There is no greater lesson I could impart than this."

The student said to him, "Well said, teacher. I understand that better than anything else I've read or heard at Church. God is the one, and there is no one or no thing greater than He. And to show His amazing love to our neighbors and co-workers and family and strangers and yourself is worth more than all the rules and rituals and fake things that are disguised as happiness."

The whole class was stunned by the clarity this explanation presented. We get this, they all realized. This, we can relate to more than a bunch of dates and rules and historical facts that appear on our Religion Class quizzes. No one needed to ask anymore questions. This was enough for the day. In fact, it was enough for a lifetime. Class was dismissed, and the students left with a fresh air of joy, peace, and love among them.

Ray went straight home, even though some of his friends were going out for ice cream. He couldn't wait to get home and tell his family about this new revelation! This felt like a true turning point in his life. As he drove through town passing all the lights and traffic, he laughed out loud to himself, "I thought those stories of Holy Spirit moments were all made up. But now I know, this stuff is real!" He was amazed it had happened to him!

Barely taking time to turn the key and put his truck in park, Ray sprinted across the front lawn and took the front steps two at a time. He burst through the front door startling his mother. "Where are the twins?" he blurted out. "They just finished bath time," she said. "Your dad is helping them get ready for bed." Ray couldn't contain his excitement. "Hurry Mom. Go get them! I have exciting news to share!" He felt like he had just discovered a new planet, or like he struck gold in the back yard.

Timothy and Tabitha appeared in their footed pjs and wet hair. They were delighted to postpone bedtime and see what their big brother was so excited about. They were only 8 years old, and to them life was very unfair and unbalanced. Why should they have to go to bed so early when Ray wasn't even home yet? It seemed to them that Ray had way more privileges than they ever would. Mom and Dad urged Ray to move along with sharing his great news.

"Sit down my little munchkins," Ray said to his younger siblings. He had called them that since they were born planning to bribe them into doing his chores as they grew up. After all, being the oldest should come with certain privileges. "I have something very important to talk to you about," he told them. "Tonight at youth group, I learned the meaning of true love!" Mom gave a sideways look to Dad. Timothy rolled his eyes and thought, "Oh brother! Ray's gotten mushy on us!" He began to wonder if this was worth staying up late for.

Ray said, "To help you understand, let's play a little game." That sparked Timothy's interest again. Ray continued, "Think of the worst job in the world and write it down on these pieces of paper." Funny enough, each twin wrote the same answer: Scooping Poop!!! This likely had much to do with their main chore being to clean up the doggie deposits left in the back yard by their chocolate labs "Snickers" and "Hershey." "Ok" Ray said. "You both chose the same job. Now, think of how you feel when Mom says it's time to scoop the poop." Tabitha quickly responded, "We feel terrible because it's a dirty, stinky job, and we hate doing it!"

"Perfect!" Ray said. The twins looked cross-eyed at each other. Surely Ray was delighted that was their job and not his! "Now, picture the back yard if you didn't scoop every day. There would be mounds of that stuff all around and the yard would be such a big mess that you wouldn't be able to play out there. And, the neighbors would most likely complain. So, it HAS to be done.

"But, what if you first thanked God for our great pets, and did your job with love because you love them so much? Wouldn't that be much better than being fussy and grumpy about it?!" Mom interjected a resounding, "Amen! Doing any job, but especially stinky ones, with love is much better for you and for everyone around you. My own mother taught me 'if you don't love what you're doing, then go do something else. If you must do something you don't enjoy, do it with love anyway.' When you were babies, I didn't love cleaning up your messes, but I happily did it because I have so much love for you."

Ray added, "Yeah! That's it! That's what I learned tonight! When you have to scoop all the poop, think about how much you love Snickers and Hershey while you're doing it. Others will be able to see your love in caring for the dogs, not your disgust." Mom added, "And when I am called to do something for a neighbor who I don't really feel love for, I will think of how much I love God and how much God loves them and me while I'm doing it."

It just seemed so clear to Ray now. He felt closer than ever to God and his family. They all did.

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