



Trinity and All Saints Joint Service – November 26, 2019

Thanksgiving Basket Blessing and Delivery to the Community

“The Blessings Basket” – A Thanksgiving Story

The family sat quietly around their kitchen table on this late autumn Wednesday evening. Outside the flurries of the first snow of the season were drifting groundward, silhouetted in the dim streetlight, valiantly, but futilely trying to hold back the early and intense darkness of late November. The kitchen table was where all the important things happened for the family. Celebrations and sorrows, victories and defeats, good news and news not so good. All shared around this small circle of wood covered in a tattered oilcloth that was the center of their universe. The family sat around the table together in joyfulness when they heard the news that Dad had gotten on at the mine, a mechanic for the big trucks. And that perhaps there would be a bit of extra money now and that Dad would be able to quit his second job as the school janitor on second shift, and maybe slow down a little, and not be so tired. And that Mom might not be so

stressed out all the time having to try to pay all the bills with not enough to go around. Having to pay half of this and some of that... things would be different now. Times would be good around the table. And so it was, times were good... there was food and new shoes... a TV appeared to replace the old radio... Mom and Dad smiled more... laughed more.

The family sat around the table when they heard the news that Dad had been injured in a bad accident at the mine. The mine foreman sat down and at the table told the story of the accident. Dad was trying to change a huge tire on one of the mine trucks and something unexpected happened and the tire fell on him breaking both his legs. Dad was in the hospital and would not be home for awhile.

The family sat around the table when Dad arrived home from the hospital, broken in body and spirit. No insurance, no money, no job... no hope.

And now again on this day... this gray, cold November day before Thanksgiving, the family called again around the table... no celebrations for quite awhile now... just more family news... most of it not that great. Today family learned that the monthly check from the mining company, all \$47.50 of it, was late again. Mom was hoping to be able to at least salvage something of a Thanksgiving dinner with a last-minute trip to the grocery. But that wasn't going to happen and this meeting was to tearfully explain and apologize... tomorrow's dinner

would be the last remains of the peanut butter and the few remaining pieces of Wonder bread left in the bread box. The children reacted as children do sometimes... with great love and understanding. The oldest daughter bringing all the kids to consensus around exactly how much they all loved peanut butter, and that Turkey and trimmings were very overrated anyway. And besides they had their turkeys anyway... and there on the table were the construction paper Turkey masterpieces of artwork that all the littles had brought home earlier that day from school. All was quiet around the kitchen table when there was a very loud and very unexpected knock on the front door. Expecting the worst, another bill, foreclosure statement or summons... eldest daughter rose courageously, instinctively knowing that her mother and father could bear not one more of life's punches this night. She rose wordlessly and willed herself to open the door with as much courage as a 12-year-old has.

“Happy Thanksgiving!!!!” The words rang out, sung out by a whole street full of neighbors, friends and strangers. Daughter could not believe her eyes... thought it a dream as she stood stunned against the chorus of Happy Thanksgiving... Happy Thanksgiving... Happy Thanksgiving that seemed to come from everywhere.

We have “Blessing Baskets” for you... they said. Blessing Baskets! Mom, Dad, come quick... Daughter shouted... they have Blessing Baskets! And come they did...as one, family jumped up from the

kitchen table to gratefully and graciously receive the blessing that awaited them at their front door and down into the street. Food and clothes and money to pay the mortgage and get the power turned back on. Turkeys and potatoes, cranberries and pies. Every manner of Blessings - edible blessings, wearable blessings, spendable blessings - and blessings that we would only come to know later. Blessings of friendship, blessings of hope and trust... blessings of prayerfulness and presence. That night around the little circle of a kitchen table blessings fell from the sky like the glittering snowflakes in the streetlight. And when all the laughing and cheering, and thanking and tearing had come to a close, when the piles of cans and boxes and loaves and clothes had been ooh'ed and ah'ed upon well into the night? The family sat around the little kitchen table and Mama opened the little envelope in the bottom of the last box. What's it say, Mama...and the whole family squinted and squeezed and tried to read the beautiful and dignified letters on the elegant card. And Mama read the words slowly and carefully so we could all hear and understand...

Dearest Family, please accept these humble Blessing Baskets offered with deep respect and honor for you and yours in thanksgiving for what we have received and now have shared as we have been shown to do.

Happy Thanksgiving...from your friends and neighbors at St Mark's.

And the family looked and looked from one to another, each silently questioning and trying to remember; all resorting to that “confused puppy” head, slightly-turned look of confusion.... St. Marks’...St Mark’s . Oh....that big old stone church...way across town.

And finally the youngest around the table stated the obvious on all the family’s mind... “but Mama, we don’t go there...that’s not our church, why would they do all this for us?” And Mama stated it clearest of all.... “I guess they just love us, sweetheart....I guess they just love us.”

And the snow winked and the darkness seemed to flee from around the little kitchen table...pushed away by the power of love and friendship and respect all in some simple baskets overflowing with all the hope and love and joy that a basket can hold....a small light on a dark November night.

As we too, now this very night...do what we have been shown and taught to do as followers of the Jesus Movement. Taught how to “be a blessing”, taught how to be thankful, taught how to give our best, taught to channel the Blessed One’s grace through us back into the world. Taught to demonstrate the sacredness within us. Taught to acknowledge and recognize the Spark of the Divine that resides in us all. Taught to create Sacred Space and to connect to “the Holy” and not let go. Taught to “Be a Blessing”. Taught going into the night ... blessings and love overflowing our little baskets, ever

remembering Our Teachers simple yet profound instructions...

“Blessed Ones, Love one another, as I have loved you!”

And we remember Mama’s simple words around that kitchen table...
on that chilly November night long ago....

“I guess they just love us sweetheart, I guess they just love us.”

And the people answered... Yes we do... Yes we do.