

True helpfulness



Matthew 6: 1-4

The Lord Jesus explained in the Sermon on the Mount what true helpfulness is.

He said: "One who only helps others so that people will praise him, seeks his reward here on earth. But God looks into our heart. He sees when we do good secretly, and he blesses what we do. This is our reward."

2

The children learn that true helpfulness comes from the heart
and is seen by our heavenly Father.

T

oday you will hear about a girl named Judith.

Judith lived with her parents and many brothers and sisters in a house in one of the densely populated areas of the city of Capernaum. Jesus Christ and his disciples also lived and worked in this neighbourhood at that time.

It is late in the afternoon. Judith enters the living-room with a broom in her hand. "That's it, my work is done! You know, Mother, sometimes it seems to me as if this floor has never been swept before, it is so dirty every day."

"I am not surprised with children like you and your brothers and sisters," replies her mother with a smile. "Come and sit here with me, Judith! The bread will soon be ready." Mother does not have to say that a second time. Judith loves to watch how the flat loaves change in the clay-oven into crispy loaves of bread. Mother is softly humming a melody to herself. Judith recognizes it and joins in with her clear, young voice. Soon the bread is ready. The whole room is filled with the delicious aroma of freshly-baked bread. Mother says to Judith: "I must still go down to the fountain to fetch water. Do you want to come with me?"

"Of course!" While Judith puts on her sandals and fetches the clay jars, Mother quickly pulls a shawl over her hair.

At this time of day there is a great hustle and bustle in the streets of the city. Judith sees a man handing out alms to some beggars. "Look, Mother, that must be a very pious man. He is giving something to every beggar!"

"I don't know whether this man is really so pious. I have often seen him. He gives many alms and is therefore highly respected."

1

When Judith and her mother arrive at the fountain, this incident has already been forgotten. Here Judith can chat with other girls her age. On the way back, they meet many excited people. "What are they talking about? From what I can gather, they are so impressed with a sermon they have heard," remarks Judith. "Let's ask Father when he comes home tonight," her mother suggests.

A little later the whole family is gathered around the dinner table. Judith excitedly tells her father: "Father, this afternoon I helped Mother fetch water. We met many people on the way who were speaking about a sermon they had heard. Do you know what sermon that was?" Her father answers: "Yes, this afternoon there really was great excitement in the city. There was talk that Jesus and his disciples had gathered on a hillside nearby. I was curious too, so I went there. I had trouble getting close to Jesus as so many people had already gathered around him. Then, suddenly, everything became

very quiet. Jesus started to speak. I have never heard anyone speak so powerfully as this Jesus did." The whole family is listening attentively to the father's story. Judith suddenly sits up when Father relates the following: "Jesus said that we must be careful to give alms only secretly because God also sees these secret actions. One who boasts with his good deeds receives no reward from God." Judith immediately thinks of the man they saw that afternoon.

After dinner Mother asks Judith: "Please take this loaf of bread to our neighbour!" On her way next door, Judith thinks: "How

much better off this woman was when her husband was still alive. Now that she is a widow, she is dependent on alms from her neighbours." Judith gladly takes the bread to her. She is very happy when her neighbour thanks her so warmly. Back home, the girl remarks to her mother: "You know, Mother, it is wonderful to be able to make someone happy." Mother looks at her daughter affectionately: "Yes Judith, the point in helping someone is to bring joy. The dear Lord blesses such an attitude. The joy which we bring to others returns to our own heart."

2/3



The Lord Jesus taught: "Do good to your fellow-men out of love. God will bless you for it. That is your reward."

- 1 Ask the children to describe the first picture. What is this man doing? (Explain the word "alms".) Why does he give alms? (He wants to make these people happy. He feels sorry for the poor. He wants to be praised and esteemed for it.) How do those feel who have received the alms? (They are happy and thankful.)
- 2 We look at the second picture. How does Judith behave? We compare both pictures. What would the Lord Jesus say about these situations?
- 3 It is important to do good. The Lord Jesus says that we should be careful with what attitude we do good. One who does good to others will receive an eternal reward. The children enumerate all the good Judith has done. Together we look for possible good deeds which the Sunday-school children can do.