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The Offering Plate

Going to church with my family as a young boy, we would walk into the sanctuary and all eleven of us would take up the entire row. The congregation was fine with this, because who in their right mind would want to sit with 8 squirming boys? My father seemed to have a wingspan that went from one end of the church pew to the other, which, as he sat in the middle, kept all of us in check. I have fond memories of growing up in my family and of the things my father taught us at an early age. I remember, that when we went to church and it was offering time, my father would break out a roll of nickels and hand one to each of us. I used to think "wow this nickel could buy me a five-pack of chewing gum", but the plate would come by, and I would lay the nickel in. My father could tell, that I struggled with that decision, but he trusted me to do the right thing. Later he used to hand us quarters to put in the offering plate, but by then it made me feel good to put the money in the plate, and I didn't have the temptation to use it for myself. Over the years my father taught me that there was a lot of joy in giving to others.

My father lived a life devoted to Christ and was a very giving man, who helped many people and who sacrificed his life to the service of others through

the gift of medicine. My father was also given the spiritual gift of compassion, which he used to serve God. I never knew a more compassionate person in my life, a person who truly cared about the wellbeing of others. He wasn't a preacher, a prophet, a teacher, or a politician. I don't intend to put my dad on a pedestal and make him seem larger than life, but he was a tall man [six-foot seven] who knew his purpose in life and lived it well. Not only did he live it well, but he was also a great Christian example for his children and others that knew him through his actions.

God has entrusted all of His children with spiritual gifts, that we can choose to use and develop in order to help others, or we can refuse to develop our gifts and let them rot so that they become useless to help anyone.

God showed us how to give to others when He gave His only Son as a sacrifice for our sins. He did this, because He loved us and didn't want to lose us to sin and its destructive power. He showed us how to give to others through grace and love.

The big question is, do

the children of God know how to love and give sacrificially as their Father in heaven has taught them? Do we understand the big picture that we can't take any of our "things" with us when we die? Do we understand, that there are millions of people starving throughout the world ;and that our food pantries are usually bare and bellies are empty, while we stroll up and down the grocery aisles stuffing unnecessary food into our carts that we use to satisfy our hedonistic desires?

God saves us from ourselves, as we ignore a world that craves a satanic feast of self-satisfying desires, which can only lead to an eternal separation from Him. God wants everyone to live forever with Him. Your time on earth may be limited, and your only regret will be, that you didn't take the time to give to others in need through your time, your money, and your prayers.

It is never too late to serve the God who made us all, so that we can be a blessing to others and share in God's joy. Don't lose out on the chance of a lifetime. God's offering plate is big enough for all of us to step into.

Dr. Harold

A Note of Encouragement from Kelly...

It has been over four years since the day I sat in church listening to our church family of missionaries to Kenya speak on people groups around the world who were “unchurched”, meaning those who did not know Jesus Christ. The statement was made that one of the largest growing groups of those “unchurched” was the deaf population. This statement had a profound impact on me that day. Little did the speaker know...we were about to undergo diagnostic testing to determine if our youngest son, Isaac, was deaf as a result of complications from his premature birth at 33 weeks gestation. I felt God speaking to me that day and preparing me for the journey we were about to embark on with Isaac’s hearing loss. I can still feel the passion welling up inside my chest and the conviction that arose when I heard the words, “Isaac is severely to profoundly deaf in one ear and moderately to severely deaf in the other.” My son would not become a statistic! I vowed that my son would know Jesus Christ and he would be a witness and a blessing to all who know him. I am extremely blessed to report that Isaac is doing amazingly well despite the grim predictions for his speech and language that we were originally given.

The State of Illinois made newborn hearing screening mandatory in 2002 for all hospitals delivering newborns. The screening is to be completed before discharge. Newborns at risk for hearing loss include those born prematurely, those who are patients of a neonatal intensive care unit (NICU), those exposed to medications known to cause hearing loss (often used in premature newborns in the NICU), those exposed to excessive loud noise and those with a family history of hearing loss. Some babies with hearing loss have no risk factors at all. That is why newborn hearing screening is essential for early diagnosis and treatment of hearing loss.

GRANDKID CORNER . . .



Papa with his great grandkids on his 80th birthday . . .

Isaac was diagnosed with Bilateral Sensorineural Hearing Loss shortly after his premature birth. The exact cause of his loss remains unknown. Isaac communicates through the assistance of digital hearing aids and speech and language therapy. The Lord led us to a wonderful group of doctors, audiologists and therapists who are dedicated to optimizing children’s hearing and language. Isaac’s hearing loss is progressive and he will most likely benefit from a Cochlear Implant in the ear that is most profoundly affected. Isaac is a wonderful little boy. He is very talkative, caring and very much ‘in charge’ of our home! We affectionately refer to him as our CEO! With four older siblings to cater to him, as well as Mom & Dad, we have all indulged his need to be in charge. Isaac has friendships, interacts and is mischievous just like all four year olds can be.



Kelly and her son Isaac

My son certainly knows Jesus despite his hearing loss. He can be found praising and worshiping at church as well as on the family living room stage in our home with his brother and sister! He can be seen praying, hands folded and with one eye open at family prayer time. It is difficult for him to follow along at times due to his inability to hear (hence the one-eyed prayer) but that doesn’t seem to discourage him at all.

Notify your provider immediately if you experience any of the following signs of preterm labor:

- Contractions every 10 minutes or more often before you have completed 37 weeks of pregnancy
- Change in vaginal discharge (leaking of fluid or blood from your vagina)
- Pelvic pressure
- Low, dull backache
- Cramps that feel like your period
- Abdominal cramping with or without diarrhea