**If I Can Help Somebody**

**By Michele A. Sisson**

Good morning! My name is Michele Sisson, and I serve as church secretary here at New World United Methodist Church. I have placed the altar arrangements to honor the memories of my grandmothers, Mary Jones Russell and Harriet Garrett Sisson. Those two precious women had the biggest hearts and the most generous spirits of anyone I have ever known. I have very fond memories of them sharing the need to be generous and kind with me while a very young girl. This passage of scripture reminds me of those teachings: “For we are what He has made us, created by Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life”. Ephesians 2:10 (NRSV)

As Pastor Edgar and I were talking soon, after he returned from vacation, he told me his plan for a sermon series entitled “Godly or Wicked.” I immediately became very excited and began chattering away about how my initial impression of my New World family was as I observed their acts of generosity and kindness toward everyone. I witnessed examples of Godliness from the moment I began working here. Prime examples:

* + - A young college student closely related to my New World family was short several hundred dollars for his tuition. A very generous group of ladies provided him with that tuition immediately. They learned of a need, they filled it, and the young man was able to complete the semester.
    - A member was ill, at home recovering from a fall, and New World Church introduced me to the Food Train—a very well-organized ministry that provided many meals for the family. I saw that organized effort completed in a very short period of time.
    - Once a member and I were laughing about *healthy snacks*. Next thing I knew a little package of healthy snacks was given to me; and that has continued for over a year.
    - There is a group of men that goes out voluntarily to shore up members’ homes, patching fences and taking care of other small jobs around the house.
    - The members of the Board of Trustees pitch in and do work that most churches hire people to do. They are proud of this facility and work hard to maintain its beauty. There are so many skills and talents among the trustees, and sharing these gifts with their church is another example of Godly behavior.
    - We have two faithful members who are also the guardian angels on duty each weekday, protecting the staff and children, performing light duty tasks in the building, and bringing smiles and friendly conversations. These two angels arrive early enough in the morning to greet the day school students, and some days, they stay long enough to enjoy lunch with the staff. And they’re always available to run errands to Wal Mart, the post office, and auto repair shops.
    - Volunteering is in New World UMC’s DNA. A special group of members makes up the ministry that I call “technical communications.” Engineers— retired and those who are not—are at the sound board at every worship, making certain that our audio and visual technology run smoothly. One of our volunteers is a retired teacher who uses her tech savvy to keep us all connected. She sends out our newsletter three times a week, designs our weekly church bulletins, sets up our Zoom meetings, sends occasional e-blasts, and maintains the database with all our members’ email addresses.
    - The children of New World Day School comfortably exemplify Godly behaviors at their tender ages. Some mornings when I arrive, I spend a few minutes sitting in my car watching them as they play outdoors. One of the little ones might trip while running toward the door, and a playmate helps them up. A group is drawing with sidewalk chalk, and happily sharing the colorful pieces with one another. And of course, there is the gardening, where the little ones take turns tending the plants.

These are just a few of the Godly behaviors that I learned about within the first two months that I worked here.

So, Pastor Edgar said, and I quote, “Would you like to share this with the congregation one Sunday once the sermon series begins?” And I quickly said, ***yes -*** thinking that 5 minutes of info-sharing was what he meant. Little did I know that I misunderstood, and my presentation this morning will take a little more than 5 minutes.

If you would indulge me a little longer than 5 minutes, I will share my own personal observations and experiences with Godly behavior. In reminiscing about my very early childhood, I learned the meaning of the act of sharing. That happened almost immediately upon the arrival of my baby sister, Toni. Sharing and caring and looking after her were my primary responsibilities. As time passed, of course, I got even broader lessons about Godly behaviors in place of wicked behaviors as I went through school. Our family always had a pet; although Toni and I enjoyed playing with our pets, we were also responsible for caring for and cleaning up behind them and showing them love and kindness.

My mother, father, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins instilled in me the importance of helping others; even when we didn’t have a lot, we always had enough to share with those less fortunate. I passed these behaviors on to my daughters and watched as they exemplified these values. As Pastor and I discussed Godly or Wicked behaviors, I thought how wonderful it would be if the caring, sharing, and generosity of my New World family could be passed on to the whole world.

As a teenager at James Madison High School in Dallas, our choir often sang a beautiful hymn entitled “If I Can Help Somebody,” written by Alma Bazel Androzzo and first recorded and released by Billy Eckstine with Bobby Tucker and his orchestra in 1957. I’d like to read the words to that song to you:

**If I can help somebody as I pass along**

**If I can cheer somebody with a word or song**

**If I can show somebody he is traveling wrong**

**Then my living shall not be in vain**

**If I can help somebody as I pass along**

**Then my living shall not be in vain**

**If I can do my duty as a Christian ought**

**If I can bring back beauty to a world up wrought**

**If I can spread God's message as the master taught**

**Then my living shall not be in vain**

**If I can help somebody as I pass along**

**Then my living shall not be**

**Then my living shall not be in vain**

**Then my living shall not be in vain**

New World Church, this song reminds me of your hearts and souls and Godly behaviors. I appreciate the love, kindness, generosity, friendships, and joy the members have shown me since day one.

I have often heard rumors of wicked behaviors at other churches where unkind words are spoken, jealousies take the place of kindness, and selfishness overshadows taking care of others. In the nearly four years that I’ve worked here, I’ve not seen that at New World. And I am grateful.