



**MARCH 21, 2025**

***Key Verse: Galatians 5:13-14***

For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence, but through love become slaves to one another. For the whole law is summed up in a single commandment, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'

***The Devotion:***

There were amid all the slaughters of the holocaust, those who dared to go against the terrible tide and help one another. This is just one of those stories.

In Poland, three Jewish people were hiding in a hut in the woods. Suddenly there was a knocking at the door; fearing the Nazis, they were terrified to answer – they knew what the concentration camps held. But they also wondered if it was someone needed help. So, they decided to answer the door and discovered two injured Polish soldiers, their enemies, badly bleeding. Even though they had only a tiny bit of food, they shared what they had and nursed the soldiers back to health. When the soldiers were better, they used their knowledge and credentials to help their rescuers escape to safety.

We are constantly faced with choices in life. Most force us to choose between safety and risk. The risk in our lives, however, is usually not as dramatic as it was for the people in this story. But it is risk, nonetheless.

Think about it. When we choose to open our hearts to another, we risk great pain and heartbreak. When we offer something of ourselves to another, we risk rejection. When we choose to stand up for what we believe, we risk ridicule or persecution. Sometimes, particularly in the moment when we must choose, the fear is so strong that it seems that we should simply retreat, choose to be safe. Yet in the instant we choose to be safe, we have already done ourselves the greatest harm, for it is then that we cut ourselves off from the potential of warmth and comfort from others.

You see, we're brought into this world feeling helpless and alone. Our task is to consciously build the connections that will return us to the all-embracing heart of humanity. But we can only find our way if we are willing to take the chances we are offered. Do we? Do you?

I wonder just how open are we? Do we embrace the reality that our Lord's teaching continually highlighted; the importance of generosity and serving those in need?

Over these next weeks I would like to encourage you to spend some deliberate time reflecting on these important words: "My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you." "Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you." "In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven." "Give, and it will be given to you."

What more needs to be said? The direction is clear. It's not about playing it safe and holding back when it comes to the active service that we do in His name. It's about keeping busy and doing what we can – when we can – for those we can. It's about taking the risk in His name.

***The Prayer:***

Gracious God, Open our hearts to your call that we might see the opportunities, in and around us, to serve those in need. May your love be the first thing we offer to each other. Amen