

The Message of Love

Once upon a time in a kingdom far, far away, two friends were asked by their master to spread a message of love to the world. Both men were filled with joy, and set out to do their master's bidding. After many years, one of the men became a pastor of a beautiful church. He was renowned as a moving and remarkable speaker. It was said that his choir had voices of angels and the frescos were so beautiful people wept. People came from far and wide to hear him speak.

On the other hand, the second man also became a pastor of a small parish in a run down neighborhood not far from his friend. This poor man had trouble preparing his homilies and his parish struggled with lack of funds. Sunday after Sunday he spoke of God's love for his people. Not being a wonderful orator, some parishioners remained to help their pastor, while many left to hear the "famous" pastor up the street.

Every week, the "poor" pastor tried to prepare a moving message to touch people's hearts, but, he was often distracted. It seemed that every time this poor man sat down to prepare his homily, he had to run to a sick bed, visit a parishioner in prison, help a single mom find a few dollars to feed her child, talk to an elderly parishioner who was sick, depressed or lonely. Years went by. The rich parish got richer and the little parish down the street barely seemed to survive.

Then one day the master appeared to the "famous" pastor. This man was overwhelmed and thought that his master must be so proud of him because he had accomplished so much. He thought about his rich parish, his marvelous choir, the fabulous collection of artwork, etc. But as he looked he saw tears in his master's eyes. "Why do you cry Lord?" he asked. "Son", the master said, "While you prepare your homilies next Saturday, look out your window and learn."

For several weeks all the "famous" pastor saw was his old friend running up the street to the hospital or the prison, talking to kids who seemed lost, stopping to talk to a beggar or simply smiling to all he would meet. Finally after a few weeks the "famous" pastor realized that his old friend could teach him much about his master's message of love. The following week the pastor in the poor parish, discouraged by the lack of attendance and the condition of his parish, decided it was time to leave; as he felt that he had failed his master.

To his amazement, the church was packed, and in the front pew sat his friend, the "famous" pastor from up the street. He approached his old friend who immediately embraced him and said, "We have come to learn from you my old friend." "To learn from me!" cried the poor pastor. "How is this?" His 'famous friend' said, "While I spoke of love in moving homilies, you my friend showed the message of love..... it is clearly written in your heart."

"My dear friend:" cried the poor pastor, "You are welcome here at any time. But, you also learned the message. In my moment of despair, you were there for me. That also shows that the message of love is written in your heart."

From that day on, their friendship blossomed. The two parishes thrived as they supported one another. It was said, that this kingdom was so full of love, you could almost touch it.