

We had communion in town, last Sunday. And As I served at the Lord's Table I saw a spill on the railing. Wine from a previous week, five or six large drops were there, a reminder that even what God would give is sometimes wasted. I thought about his word that has been lavished upon me, of a mother and a father, pastors and teachers, friends, professors, and you the people who God entrusts with the responsibility to be little Christs to me even as I am responsible to preach God's word to you, <sup>all that grace that God has poured out on me, yet my heart has been so hard that</sup> God has poured out his word, his grace upon me, yet how often out of that abundant giving, so little reaches into my heart to do what is intended. Like spills on a communion rail.

They are all going to die anyway, sooner or later. What difference does it make whether they are fed. Apart from the questions of profit, simple human decency makes up sick inside when a storm comes and cattle can't be fed, and creatures unable to care for themselves, starve to death. It is a waste.

I remember the antelope the first <sup>winter</sup> ~~summer~~ I was in this country, every other week I saw them as I drove between Lodgepole and Buck Creek. The winter was harsh, they grew thinner and thinner, until one Sunday they were no longer in their customary place, or so I thought. But spring brought the thaw, the melting of the snow, and I saw them once again, lifeless rotting carcasses on the ground. A waste.

There were spills of wine on the communion rail, a parable of God and his world.

Children are starving, mothers and fathers, grandmothers and grandfathers, and people who are just plain alone with no one to hold them through the last hours. Not cattle or antelope with no understanding, these are people who have heard of lands faraway of abundance far away. People who talk, and laugh and work, some of whom were they to live would be farmers and doctors and singers of music and preachers. But now, because so much of what God provides is being spilled, wasted they will never be the blessing God intended them to be in this world.

When I was young, and read my school books, I ~~wondered~~ thought of our land before the civil war. I pondered the cruelty of a nation, tearing people from their land and families to be chained for all their life as slaves. Later came the cruelty to the Indians, when their heart and their back was broken, heading them off ~~the~~ to the land that no one else wanted, until gold was discovered in the black Hills, and they were driven to lands less desirable still. In recent years there have been discussions of the cruelty even more monstrous, what Hitler and the German people did to the Jews and Gypsies.~~and~~

And then there is Russia, and what they have done in Afghanistan and Cambodia, and the millions of people murdered within their ~~own~~ borders during this century, and South Africa, and the evil done to blacks there. I ask, How can people treat people like that?

But this day, more than all of these who suffered because of evil and hatred, millions, hundreds of millions suffer because of the simple indifference of all the rest. In the judgement of the history books of coming generations and more significantly, I believe in the judgement of our God, the great atrocity is people starving in a world of plenty. While the best minds and dollars are spent to produce weapons to kill, a few lonely voices cry out that the hungry be fed.

You and I are not able to change all of this much. Our votes, our dollars will not suddenly transform this world into a paradise for all. We are not able to solve this problem of mankind. But we are able to help people.

When asked what the great commandment of the law was Jesus answered with two. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and <sup>with</sup> all your soul and with all your mind. And, You shall love your neighbor as yourself. Now God did not command us to love people in general, or humankind, but our neighbor as ourselves.

I hear many excuses when it comes to giving money to win some neighbors among the hungry. How do we know the money is not wasted? I answer, some surely is, like wine spilled on a communion rail. So much more is not. If out of a thousand dollars, only 800 dollars actually buys food that gets into

the stomach of a child that is going to die if ~~she~~ she does not receive it,  
in what way could you or I spend the thousand dollars more wisely.

Another says, if we feed them ~~wall~~ they not be ~~moe~~ dependent on ~~ustomorrow~~.  
Now I do not know about other programs, but I do know about Lutheran World  
Relief. Money you give through the hunger appeal of the ALC goes to help people  
help themselves. Our aid overseas is used according to the axiom, Give me a  
fish and I eat for a day, teach me to fish and I eat for a lifetime. We feed  
people in exchange for their digging wells, or canals for irrigation, for their  
developing their land or doing works that will lead to their self support.  
Except in the most extrememcases of hunger, the money you give is not used to  
give away food, but in food for work projects that will lead to the self-  
sufficiency of the people aided.

Another says, why should we aid people so far away when people ~~blaser~~  
to home, in our own country are starving. My answer is this: Then give your  
1000 dollars and disignate it for domestic hunger. Your money will stay in  
the U.S. and feed people here if that is what you think is most important.  
But do not use this as an excuse to do nothing.

I remember the spills on the communion rail. I hoped no one else noticed  
the drops of wine left to dry their. They seemed to me to speak of a lack  
of reverence for God.

I think of what God must feel as he looks down on our world. Wheat an  
corn and soybeans and oats and barley about to burst the bind, signs of  
how abundantly he has pprovided. And people where the rains no longer fall  
dying because ~~as we will~~ <sup>many will not</sup> share. And we sing our praised and say our thanks  
to the God wha said, You shall love your neighbor as yourself.