

So would I.

She left the church feeling elated as always. This sermon had spoken especially to her. The subject had been “How to imitate the Love Jesus showed.”

She came home and took out another cornstick, which she proceeded to fasten onto the birdpatch in her garden. Then she began to make pancakes for the children's party she would entertain next morning. Still the chanting from the sermon rang in her ears:

“Jesus saw the miserable ones. He fed them. Would you?” - The preacher intoned.

“So would I.” The chorus answered.

“Jesus saw those bewildered and lost. He blessed them. Would you?”

“So would I.” - The congregation caught on and joined in.

“Jesus saw those burdened and down. He raised them up. Would you?”

“So would I.”

The chanting went on and on, inside her head. She poured more grease on the frying pan, thinking of those hungry little ones.

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Her husband had become sick and went to the big City to get treatment. But he never came back. She had asked the hospital what had happened and they'd said he was released and had left no message. Perhaps some day she'd get an answer. She thought of how he might have left the hospital and had a terrible accident and no one knew. It wasn't as much the empty space in her bed as the uncertainty that nagged her. But it was all in the hands of God.

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When she came to church there was a young man standing outside. She wanted to get inside, but he said:

Excuse me?

I have no money. - She replied.

I'm not asking for money ma'am.

She waited for the man to continue.

Thing is – he said – I'm with a small organization, named Shelter for All who wants to help the homeless.

I pay my taxes. - She said.

Well, don't we all. - the young man smiled. - But sometimes we have to take matters into our own hands, since the politicians seem to have their hands full.

I'm sorry. - She said brushing past him. - Musn't be late for service.

The sermon was based on the parable of the good samaritan.

Her eyes went dim when she thought of how the man had been beaten and ignored, until finally the Samaritan stopped and took care of the man. The Pastor said:

“Love thy neighbor.” Look around. Here's plenty to love. Hallelujah!

Hallelujah! - the Chorus replied.

After the sermon she immediately went over to greet Mrs. Worthington, the kind old lady who never missed a sermon.

“You're much too kind, my Dear.” - Mrs. Worthington beamed.

And she beamed too, moved by all the kindness in the congregation.

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Someone was knocking on the door. This was a good neighborhood, who would come knocking unannounced? She opened briskly. Outside was a young woman.

Hello, Mrs. Bedlam. I'm from the Shelter for All Organization.

I've talked with someone from your – uh – people, already.

Oh. - The young woman checked her tablet.

I don't see you on the list. Have you got your tent yet?

Tent? I don't think I understand.

Perhaps you didn't get a proper explanation? - The young woman smiled a smile Mrs. Bedlam found troubling.

We try to give homeless people a place to stay, out of the street. And since you have such a lovely garden...

The phone rang.

I'm sorry I have to get that. Have a nice day.

Mrs. Bedlam closed the door and picked up her phone.

Hello Pastor. Yes thank you, it was such a lovely sermon. I'm fine thank you. Yes I appreciate the call. Have a nice day.

What a lovely man, that Pastor Cummings. Calling the members of his congregation, just to make sure they were alright.

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She saw the news on the local station. Pastor Chapman had been arrested. He was from the neighboring parish. She didn't really listen to the reporter, only saw the images flickering on her screen: A man in a tent, in the churchyard being hauled out and escorted off the premises. He didn't resist. Pastor Chapman sitting in the backseat of a policecar, saying: "...Shall be known by their fruits...". Then the policecar door closed.

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As Mrs. Bedlam came to her church she was relieved to see no one was standing outside. The sermon of the day was: We're all in the hands of God.

God will provide. - Pastor Cummings said.

Amen. - The chorus chanted.

God will show the way.

Amen.

God will give you peace.

Amen. - Mrs. Bedlam said.

The end.