



A LIFE THAT MATTERS

John Farewell | State Circuit Rider

A story written by Kelly Willard tells of a man, who was the new pastor of a church, that disguised himself as a homeless person who mingled with his new congregation outside of the church one Sunday morning. The church members were eagerly awaiting their new head pastor, who was going to introduce himself that morning. However they did not expect him to show up in this kind of a disguise.



During the first 30 minutes he walked around among them, while the church was filling with people. Only one person said hello to him. He asked people for some change to buy food, but not one person offered him any. He went into the sanctuary and sat down, but was asked by the usher to move to the back. He greeted people only to be greeted back with stares and dirty looks, with people looking down on him and judging him.

Sitting at the back of the church he listened to the announcements. Then an elder excitedly announced the arrival of the new pastor. "We would like to introduce to you our new pastor." The congregation looked around clapping with joy and anticipation. To their surprise and confusion, the homeless man, seated at the back of the church, stood up and began to walk toward the altar. The clapping slowly stopped as all eyes were on the homeless looking pastor. When he reached the altar he took the microphone and paused for a moment.

He looked at the congregation and told them what he had experienced that morning. He then said, "I hope you all go home

and reflect on what happened here this morning and examine your hearts. See you all next Sunday." Many heads were bowed in shame, many began to weep, while others looked at each other in realization of their unkindness. It doesn't matter how many Sundays you sit in church or how good of a person you think you are, your actions will always speak louder than your words.

Being someone who travels nearly 5000 miles a month, it provides me a lot of time to reflect on life and what truly matters. Contemplating on the contents of this article and what I would like to say has proved to be challenging. One thought that has stuck in my mind is "Why do I do what I do and who even cares anyway?" Not that I'm speaking solely about what I do for a living, rather how I live my life. I wake up every morning and think to myself, "How can I make a difference in someone's life today?" While many nights I sadly fall asleep thinking, "Well..... I failed again."

Life, with all its ups and downs, can certainly weigh heavy on the soul. Mortgage payments, utility bills, car loans, credit card payments, loss of job, death in family, old age, divorce or any of the endless barrage of challenges that life throws at us, can at times seem overwhelming. Fortunately, hidden within these challenges are the rewards that make it all worthwhile. A new child or grandchild added to the family, an unexpected raise for a job well done, a promotion, family gatherings, a well deserved vacation just to name a few.

Nevertheless, I can't but wonder what it's all about. Is this all there is? Too often we get caught up with the details of life that we forget to live. The struggles will always be there, but the true challenge is learning how to react to them in a positive way. Remembering to attack problems not people is a true sign of maturity.

I close with these words by Michael Josephson: Some day it will all come to an end. There will be no more sunrises, minutes, hours, or days. All the things you collected, whether treasured or forgotten, will pass to someone else. Your wealth, fame and temporal power will shrivel to irrelevance. It will not matter what you owned or what you were owed. Your grudges, resentments, frustrations and jealousies will finally disappear. So too, your hopes, ambitions, plans and to-do list will expire. The wins and losses that once seemed so important will fade away. It won't matter where you came from or what side of the tracks you lived on in the end. It won't matter whether you were beautiful ►►

or brilliant. Even your gender and skin color will be irrelevant. So what will matter? How will the value of your days be measured? What will matter is not what you bought but what you built, not what you got but what you gave. What will matter is not your success but your significance. What will matter is not what you learned but what you taught. What will matter is every act of integrity, compassion, courage or sacrifice that enriched, empowered or encouraged others to emulate your example. What will matter is not your competence but your character. What will matter is not how many people you knew, but how many will feel a lasting loss when you're gone. What will matter is not your memories, but the memories of those who loved you. What will matter is how long you will be remembered, by whom and for what. Living a life that matters doesn't happen by accident. It's not a matter of circumstance, but of choice. Choose to live a life that matters. 💧💧

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