

“Without cost you have received; without cost you are to give” (Mt 10:8b). Jesus has commissioned the apostles to “Go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel... [proclaiming]: ‘The Kingdom of heaven is at hand’” (10:6-7). Each apostle was chosen by Jesus. They came freely and received a great gift in the instruction he offered and the gift of the Spirit he shared to help the Twelve “cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, drive out demons” (10:8a). Having freely received these gifts from Jesus, they are to freely give them away. To help them focus on the mission and their dependence on God, he told them to take no money, no provisions, and no extra clothing. God will provide for their needs as others freely offer lodging and food for them.

Our life is a free gift from God and God would like us to share that gift freely with others. My father recognized that his gift of writing poetry came from the Lord and he freely shared it with others. To share that gift, he often invoked God’s help. The response to a prayer might be a thought, a word or a phrase that would pop into his mind. He recognized that it came freely from God. Next involved some thought and work on the part of my father. Like hauling water, or pumping it from a well, there was effort on his part to move things along. But at poem’s completion, he couldn’t take all the credit. Without cost God had helped him; without cost he shared the gift of his poetry with others. So, let me share with you a poem he wrote on the Feast of the Epiphany, the day the Magi shared their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Life is precious ... life is a gift  
Created in his image to give others a lift.  
And the gift of self that we give others, no one will deny \_\_\_  
Is truly a gift that money can never buy.

It’s the gift of self, so precious ... so rare.  
It can be as simple as a prayer.  
It’s helping a neighbor with their needs or demands  
By using your talents ... your helping hands.

It’s having the will to willingly give.  
It’s helping a soul who’s struggling to live.  
It’s feeding the hungry and nourishing the poor.  
It’s helping another spirit to soar.

How blest we’ll be in embracing the creed:  
To be in service to those in need.  
The goal in life’s journey in reality:  
To be the best we were created to be.

It comes down to playing a vital part ...  
For our priceless gifts are the gift of heart.  
In sacrificing our time, talent, or treasure,  
The beneficial rewards are beyond our measure

How blessed to give, rather than receive \_\_\_  
To show in action and firmly believe \_\_\_  
To realize in all our plans \_\_\_  
We are truly God’s helping hands.

Our life is a gift from God. What we do with our lives is our gift back to God. Be generous. Share the gifts from God so that your very life may proclaim the same message the apostles carried when they went out on mission. ‘The Kingdom of heaven is at hand’ (10:7). In this season of preparation, never forget the “gift of self.”