

PLAIN TRUTH®

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CHRISTIANITY WITHOUT THE RELIGION®



A Five-Cent Ice Cream Cone

Greg Albrecht

“...Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these my brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me” (Matthew 25:40).

Jesus explained that he would live his kingdom within his followers in such a way that the little things done in his name would be for him and even “to” him as much as they were for and “to” another person.

Jesus talked about offering a cup of cold water to a person who was thirsty. He talked about kindness to strangers and giving clothing to those in need. He talked about visiting the sick and those in prison.

While we won’t find Jesus specifically talking about buying

and giving a **Five-Cent Ice Cream Cone** in the Bible, I believe a **Five-Cent Ice Cream Cone Bible** can have a great deal to do with the gospel. **Five-cent ice cream cones** don’t exist anymore, but our story is set in such a time...

Our story is about a young boy who was named Issur Danielovitch at birth. Later, early in life, his name was changed to Izzy Demsky. Izzy grew up in Amsterdam, New York with his immigrant parents and six sisters. Izzy Demsky’s father was a ragman, buying old clothing and collecting discarded pieces of metal and junk.

The Demsky family grew up impoverished, living in the poorest part of town. The lowest rung on the ladder in the poorest part of town was the profession of ragman.

Ragmen did not make enough money to take care of their families, so as he grew up, Izzy scrambled to help the family. Izzy delivered newspapers, he worked as a janitor and a gardener... he had forty different jobs before he entered the career that made him famous.

Izzy Demsky changed his name one more time—when he entered the United States Navy in World War 2, he took the name Kirk Douglas.

The Oscar-winning actor Kirk Douglas, whose most career-defining role in the movies may have been when he played the Roman rebel slave Spartacus, tells a story about his father in his autobiography, *“The Son of a Ragman.”*

Douglas remembered being extremely close to his mother as he grew up in his impoverished family, while his father seemed emotionally detached. He recalled how much he craved the love of his father.

At school, the young Kirk Douglas (Izzy Demsky then) was given a major speaking, dancing and singing role in a play that would be performed one evening. Kirk Douglas knew his mother would be there because she was always supportive, but he seriously doubted whether his father would make the effort to attend. About halfway through the program, the young Kirk Douglas (Izzy) was standing on the stage, having

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already located his mother in the audience, when he caught view of his father standing at the very back of the auditorium.

When the play was over, the young Kirk Douglas was hoping his father would come up and congratulate him on a job well done. His father came up to him and, as usual, didn't say much or express any outward affection. But, as they left the auditorium, he asked his son if he would like to stop on the way home and have a **Five-Cent Ice Cream Cone**.

As Kirk Douglas looked back on his life, he reflected on all the awards he had won and been given, he said that most of all, he prized that ice cream cone more than anything—even more than his Oscar.

God's Grace and Gracious Good Manners

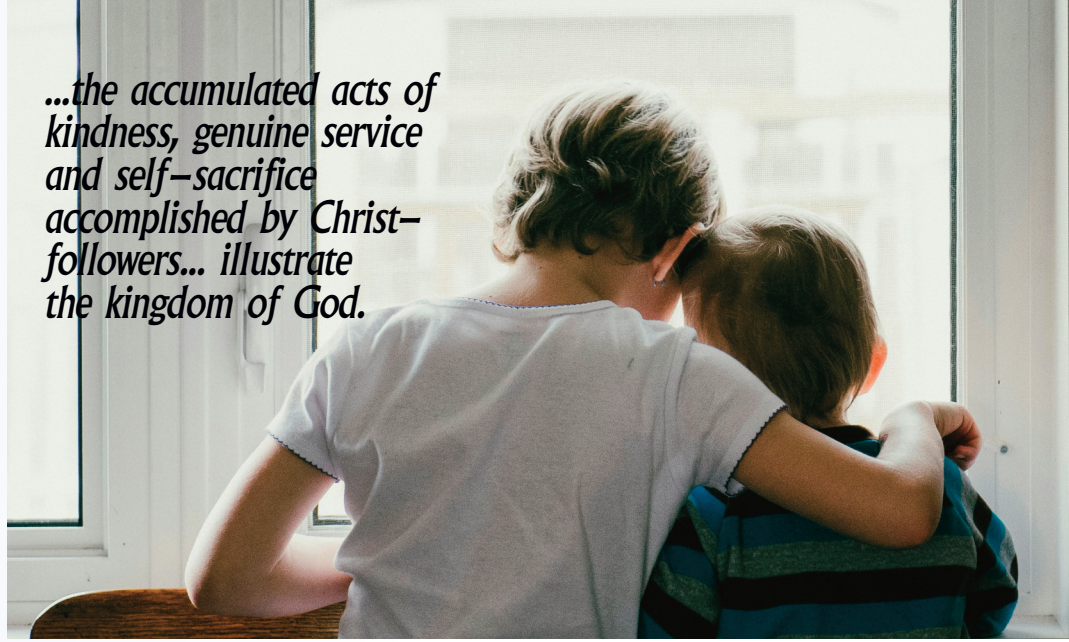
It is so easy to think that what you might do as a Christ-follower is insignificant and unnecessary. It is so easy for Christ-followers to think our contributions and gracious acts of service are so small perhaps we should not even bother.

But when Jesus explained *how* we are his servants, he did not talk about how we might change the world by building a hospital, founding a school or curing a disease.

But Jesus said that *where two or three are gathered together...* maybe just for a chat... maybe just for a phone call or email... maybe just for coffee and snacks, or to attend a movie or walk in the park... maybe to visit a friend or loved one in the hospital—in such small and unremarkable times and events he is with us and in us and in them (Matthew 18:19-20).

The secret of the kingdom of God is like a **Five-Cent Ice Cream Cone**. It doesn't take much to make a difference in the life of another! The principle of extending ourselves and helping others is not only a hallmark of Christ-centered

...the accumulated acts of kindness, genuine service and self-sacrifice accomplished by Christ-followers... illustrate the kingdom of God.



faith—it is one of those gracious traits of “good manners” so sadly missing in our contemporary world. We often have no idea about how and when “good manners” and gracious behavior will impact the life of another.

You may be familiar with the name Roone Arledge. Before he died in 2002 of cancer at the age of 71, Arledge became a television legend. He made ABC into a commercial powerhouse and was the brains behind the success of the early versions of ABC evening news.

During an interview, Arledge told the story about how he got his start in television. He was a young man, looking to start his career. He had navigated his way through several interviews and he was now sitting outside the office waiting to see the man in charge of programming for a small television station.

Several years before that interview, Arledge was paying for college by working as a waiter in a restaurant in Cape Cod called the Wayside Inn. One night a family came in after the dining room had closed. As he was cleaning up, young Roone Arledge saw their disappointment, came over and invited them to take a seat at one of the tables. He told them that he would find something in the kitchen so that they could have their dinner.

The family was extremely grateful. After they finished their meal they asked him for his name.

A few years later, Roone Arledge had graduated from college, and he was looking for a job in the television industry. He found himself sitting outside the office of the man who had the power to hire him.

Roone Arledge was ushered into the office. The programming director remembered him, and greeted him by asking, “How is everything at the Wayside Inn on Cape Cod?”

The young Roone Arledge was confused. He said, “What do you mean?”

The director of programming said, “You don't remember me but I remember you. Several years ago, my family and I were on vacation, and we came into the dining room at the Wayside Inn after the kitchen had closed, and you saw to it that we had dinner.”

That programming director never forgot the young waiter who extended an extraordinary, above and beyond, gesture of kindness. I don't know whether Roone Arledge was extending the grace of God or whether he was just extending “normal” graciousness and courtesy, but years later, his good manners got him the job, and the rest, as they say, is history.

Service To Others In His Name

We help in small and simple ways, sometimes, as Matthew 25 says, ways that we even forget, but they turn out to be critically important

in the life of another... and they will never forget.

And when you put all the small and little things that all members of the body of Christ produce, by God's grace, as Christ lives in them, we see the kingdom of God in action. Together, as Christ followers we can and do impact the world, in the name of Jesus.

There's an old story about an old pagan king from Babylon. According to the story, the king came back to life and visited a modern, 21st century city in North America. The pagan king was assigned a host to show him around the city. The host wanted to impress this famous and rich king from the past, so the king was shown towering skyscrapers that serve as monuments to materialism.

Then, still trying to show the Babylonian king a good time, his host showed him the wild night life of the city. When the tour was over and the host was dropping the king off at his hotel the king said to his host, "Well, I'm really not that impressed—we had huge monuments in Babylon, and wine, women and song were always available everywhere.

But I have heard many people now call themselves Christians—we didn't have them back in Babylon. What do these Christ-followers do? Where can I find them?"

So his host told him he could show him a little more of the city the next day. After the host picked up the king at his hotel, they toured drug rehabilitation centers, homeless shelters, homes for unwed mothers, soup kitchens, free medical clinics, and institutions for the disabled. He showed the pagan king Christian ministries who reached out to others with a helping hand in the name of Jesus. When the day was over, the king said to his host, "All I have seen today is new. We didn't have these things in my kingdom."

Jesus is deeply involved in random acts of kindness, small gestures—**Five-Cent Ice Cream Cones**, if you will. While serving others in Jesus' name may seem somewhat inconsequential, the accumulated acts of kindness, genuine service and self-sacrifice accomplished by Christ-followers, empowered by our risen Lord who lives within us, express and practically illustrate the kingdom of God. □



In need of mending
from Christless
religion?

Jesus brings hope, comfort,
encouragement & healing.



PTM/CWR — All Jesus, all the time