

A Better Story

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HOMELESS BUT NOT FRIENDLESS

Over the years, I've found a few unfeigned lessons assisting a community in need, called Homeless in the Park. At the start of my volunteering I brought my young son, who was maybe six or seven at the time. As we prepared to leave home that day, he got in the car with his football and said, "Just in case the other kids want to play." I hadn't witnessed a lot of children or a football, or any sport or craft, at the park when serving meals, but I knew wherever my son went with a ball, he made friends.

That day my son was the only child at the park. After serving lunch he grabbed his football and began to toss the ball high in the air during clean up. As he tossed further onto the lawn, to my surprise a number of men standing nearby took great delight and went over and began talking sports! As I continued to work, I could hear that these guys knew a good deal about sports, and they enjoyed the fact that my son knew a lot about them himself. Soon it happened that they formed a circle, tossing the football back and forth. Then they created teams and my son was quarterback. It was quite something to watch, and that was all anyone needed; a connection was made!

Becoming a man later in life my son would say, "Everything I needed to know I learned from baseball." "Well, not quite everything," I would say, but the great truth is baseball, as do sports today, embraces a noble fairness that all men are equal. Only attitude and skill draw a line of distinction, which is a fantastic lesson for any young man or woman. Quite possibly that day altered my son's impression about a few things. Most notably, what it might be like to be homeless and to make friends with that person and toss a ball. To this day he never forgot those guys!

For myself, I realized this impact was a lesson in Hope and Faith. Not everyone's life is as easy as the next, but by holding onto a bit of hope, we can make another life better. In the process, we learn by having faith that life offers great value of much more to take meaning from. We can evolve and even flourish in these moments "between the cracks".

Maybe a Better Story is about looking beyond normal and common interpretations to an unknowing and uncomfortable opportunity...as a start and for a moment.

Our better story sets aside assumption and conclusion in matters that are contradictory, to allow us to be freed to search our hearts. Consider today that we should use every possible opportunity to rethink, offer more, and reach out with the love of Christ, always remembering we, too, are in need of the Savior.