

## A Brand-New Voyage

Imagine, if you will... a town... it can be a town anywhere... that part is not important. But what *is* important is that this town *loves* its Youth Sports programs, and, *especially*, its youth soccer program.

Now... soccer requires a lot of running around... and whenever the kids play, they need to drink a lot of water. Whenever there is a game, the coaches must make sure they have enough bottled water on hand. So, this one year, there is a big playoff between the top 2 teams in the town, and it's gonna be a big deal.

Because it is such a big deal, the coaches of each of the teams splurge and buy a whole palette of those little bottles of drinking water, with the plan of giving them out to the players as well as selling them to the fans as a fund raiser. Seems like a great plan, right?

Only... the week of the big game, there is some sort of natural disaster. It's a hurricane, or a tornado, or an earthquake... again, what *kind* of a disaster is unimportant. What is *important* is, the game is cancelled, and everyone is really sad, not only because the game is cancelled, but also because there is a lot of devastation, and anything resembling a normal life has been completely disrupted... possibly forever.

So, one of the things that has happens is, there is now no running water. It will be restored eventually, but, for right now, it's just not there. However, both coaches have a pallet of drinking water still in their garage... and... at this point... decisions are made.

The one coach looks at this water and says, "Wow... this is kinda a big deal! There are now all these people needing water, and I have a large but finite supply of it. What should I do?" And, after some thought, this coach decides "I will sell this water, but I'm going to charge like \$20 a piece for them."

And their neighbor had a freezer full of burgers, and a grill, so they started cooking those up before they could go bad, and they charged \$50 for every burger.

But, eventually, the water supply and the food supply began to run out, so both neighbors started charging more, and, finally, would only trade with one another. Each was afraid to give up what they had for fear they would not have it anymore.

And the hungry and thirsty people around them began to get desperate, they started looking for ways to steal the water and the food. And this made the people who had the water and food take up weapons to defend themselves.

Well... I don't have to tell you what happens next. I can leave that to your imagination.

Now, the other coach.... That other coach that also had a pallet of water. And, again, choices were made. This coach ALSO said, "Wow... this is kinda a big deal! There are now all these people needing water, and I have a large but finite supply of it. What should I do?"

This coach got all the kids together from the team. This coach put just enough bottles of water into each kid's team backpack so that they were not overburdened. And this coach told the kids to go forth and find people that looked like they were need of water, and to give them a each a bottle. And, animals... because animals get thirsty, too.

And so, just like before, there was a neighbor with burgers. And just like before, they had to cook them up before they could go bad.

So, when one of the kids came by and checked to see if this neighbor needed any water, the neighbor gladly accepted... and gave the kid a burger to eat... plus wrapped up a few more so the kid could take them around and hand them out, too.

And that kid told her teammates, and her teammates each also came by and got a meal and some burgers to hand out. And they each told every person they met who supplied the food and the water, and, soon, doctors and nurses and repairmen, electricians, and plumbers came by to visit the water provider, and the food provider, and asked if there was anything they could do to help.

And, this continued... each person contributing what they had (even the kids, because soccer makes strong, fast little legs good for carrying), and everyone shared, and no one had to steal, because each had enough, until everything was cleaned up and life returned to normal.

You know... I was not raised Christian. In fact, I was raised completely unchurched. My mother was a very loud and impassioned atheist, which caused my dad to be incredibly quiet and private about his Catholicism. But, before rejecting it, somewhere from the depths of my mom's abandoned Methodist upbringing and my dad's secret Catholicism, they managed instill within me a deep belief in treating others as I would like to be treated myself.

Now, this is no more, or less, than the “golden rule”, and it is not unique to Christianity. You heard it in the text from Leviticus 19 that we used as our responsive reading. The Quran says “That which you want for yourself, seek for mankind.” The Bahá’í Faith says “Blessed is he who preferreth his brother before himself.” And the Buddha teaches “Hurt not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful.”

In fact, it is *so universal*, that The "Declaration Toward a Global Ethic" from the [Parliament of the World’s Religions](#) in 1993 proclaimed the Golden Rule ("We must treat others as we wish others to treat us") as the common principle for most... if not all... religions. It is the way.

About my parents... they were both born in 1920.

This is no small thing. Yes, they would be a hundred years old this year, but, lately, I have been reflecting on what this means.

They were both born in the year *after* the end of both WWI *and* the Spanish Flu pandemic. Both traumatic events would have been fresh in the minds of their parents when they were born.

Between the ages of 9 and 19, my parents experienced The Great Depression. And then, from 19 to 25, they lived through WWII.

Looking at this now, it is small wonder to me that my parents both heartily believed in the United Nations.

This year marks the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the entry into force in 1945 of the [UN Charter](#), which begins:

**WE THE PEOPLES OF THE UNITED NATIONS DETERMINED**

to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind, and

to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, and

to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, and

to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

In my mind, the United Nations were the whole world coming together to say “Enough is enough. We have had it with fascism, war, and tyranny, and we will work together to make a more loving and just world.”

I really believe in loving our neighbors as ourselves. It does not matter where we learn it... or how we accomplish it... just as long as we *do*. COVID-19 has been terrible, and it is not over. But, as Seneca once said, ““Every new beginning comes from other beginnings end.” 75 years ago, the world decided to embark on a brand-new voyage... the voyage of the United Nations.

We can do this, too... a voyage of loving our neighbors as ourselves, as we wear our masks, stay apart, and wash our hands. We can get through this, by caring for one another, by staying together by staying apart.

I believe in us. We have done it before, and we can do it again.

May it always be so.