



December 18, 2023

FAITH MATTERS

There is a one-dollar bill in a drawer in our kitchen. I had forgotten it was there until I opened that drawer the other day... and then the memories came back to me. Last summer, at the Farmer's Market in Frankfort, something happened that has stayed with me ever since. I was walking from booth to booth surveying what was sold at each one of them. When I arrived at the booth I like the best, a woman was there with her elderly father. I say "elderly" these days realizing that I am talking about somebody very much like myself. The daughter does the scurrying around. The father sits on a stool and handles the money. He and I have become friends, so to speak. We talk about the vegetables he has grown, the land that he farms, what he does all winter when the soil is frozen and cannot be tilled. His potatoes are wonderful. I ordered half a bushel, then found myself using them up so quickly that I soon returned to order some more. On a beautiful Saturday morning, I drove to town to pick them up. I greeted his daughter. She found my potatoes and gave them to me. From his stool, her father said: "I put a few extra in there for you." "Oh, thank you," I said, "but I want to pay you for them." I found a dollar in my wallet and handed it to him. He took the dollar begrudgingly then said to me, "Oh, so you had to have the last word, huh?" I said nothing... merely thanked him again and walked away.

"Oh, so you had to have the last word, huh?" Those words stayed with me as I walked back to my car... and then to the Post Office... and then to the library. And they were still with me as I walked back to his booth and saw him sitting on his stool. "Would you please give my dollar back to me?" I asked him. It was a moment of embarrassment. I wasn't sure what he would say. He reached into his cash drawer and pulled out a dollar. With a smile, he extended his arm and gave it to me. My mind was searching for words. What could I say that would somehow explain why I had come back to ask for a dollar? What I

said was something like this: "My life has been so focused on giving that I have not learned well how to receive." I said a bit more... then thanked him again and walked back to my car.

We learn things about ourselves in unexpected places and ways. What I learned about myself that morning was this: sometimes I am so intent on giving to others that I do not allow others to give to me. The Christian faith does call us to reach out and recognize the needs in our world... and the needs of people we encounter every day. And our Christian faith calls us to be active participants in meeting those needs. But our faith also calls us to be gracious receivers and to give others the joy of giving to us.

~Written by Fred Edmonds

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