

EXTREME GRACE

Chickie's Law

by Dick Duerksen

Remember the story of the "Good Samaritan?" Jesus told the story to a Jerusalem crowd, some of whom had actually been involved in the event, most of whom had read the story as it had appeared on the front page of the *Jerusalem Times*.

It was a simple story: Man traveling from Jerusalem to Jericho is assaulted, robbed, and left for dead. Church pastor comes by and ignores him. Spiritual leader comes by, notices him, and then hurries on to an appointment. Outcast disrespected enemy (The Good Samaritan) comes by; is overcome with compassion; ignores the fear of assault; applies wine, water, and bandages; unloads his donkey; loads the man on; carries him to a hotel; and pays for long-term care.

The Good Samaritan is a story of care and compassion. It's a tale pastors use to encourage members to reach out in their communities. A story homeless folks write on cardboard to remind us of our Christian duty. A narrative modern medical healers use as a model for

their caregiving in offices, hospitals, and nursing homes.

It is also a story to which Chickie has added a special twist of her own.

Chickie is a housekeeper, a hospital janitor whose "Good Samaritan" approach to cleaning floors and making beds generates dozens of compliments each week.

"My drawer is full of 'Chickie compliments,'" the hospital administrator says.

I read a few of those cards and then went looking for Chickie.

"You get lots of compliments," I said. "What do you do in those rooms that makes people feel your compassion?"

"Oh, I don't do anything special," she told me. "I just treat people like they are Jesus himself, like the broken man the Good Samaritan helped in the story."

"If it is Jesus who is sleeping in the bed," she warmed up to the subject, "I have to clean everything very carefully, under the

bed, around the windows, the TV screen, the top of the TV, everywhere! I do my best for Jesus!"

"And while I am in the room," now she was really on a roll, "I say a special prayer for whoever is actually in the bed. Sometimes I say it out loud, sometimes I say it very quietly to myself, but I always pray—like I would pray if it were Jesus Himself that was hurting."

That's Chickie's Law: Treat each person as if he or she is Christ Himself.

According to Matthew's journal about life with Jesus (chapter 25, verse 40), Jesus encouraged Chickie's Law. "I tell you the truth," Jesus said, "whatever you do for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you do it for me."

Chickie coiled the electric cord onto her vacuum and started down the hall.

"And when there is no one in the room," she had stopped and was looking back my way, "I still treat the room as if it is Jesus' room. He may be away right now, but He'll be back in a minute!"

"How can you do that?" I asked as Chickie headed off toward another room.

She paused, and pointed up to heaven.

"I don't do anything special. He does it all. I just get to push the vacuum."

