DAY FOURTEEN

FRIDAY – NOVEMBER 14, 2025

Grateful for Being a Useful Vessel

"In a large house there are articles not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay; some are for noble purposes and some for ignoble. If a man cleanses himself from the latter, he will be an instrument for noble purposes, made holy, useful to the Master, and prepared to do any good work" (2 Timothy 2:20,21).

When Percy and I lived in Columbus we attended Wesley UMC, where I served on the team that that took communion each month to anyone in our congregation who could not attend church and receive Holy Communion, for whatever reason. It was a fairly large group that was divided geographically into several two-person teams. One particular Sunday I was on the team that served at a personal care home in New Hope, a small community east of Columbus.

I went that Sunday with my portable communion case and was walking to serve the next couple on my list when I heard a faint voice calling, "Eucharist, Eucharist, Eucharist." I looked up and saw a rather frail looking man looking back at me through his open door as he continued to say, "Eucharist."

Suddenly I was faced with a dilemma. I heard the urgency in his faint voice and saw the eagerness in his eyes, but I was only authorized to serve communion to those who were members of Wesley UMC. Did I serve him and risk violating this rule and possibly being reprimanded by my pastor? Thank God, I took the risk.

He was a stranger and not even a Methodist. We Methodists say Holy Communion, not Eucharist, but I could not refuse his nearly silent plea. Something inside me compelled me to go into the room, introduced myself ad asked if he would you like to receive "the Eucharist?" He vigorously nodded, "YES!"

He was almost too weak to speak, and the words of our communion ritual were obviously different from his, but familiar enough that we managed to get through it together. His response though barely audible let me know he had shared this ritual many times in his life.

After communion, we shared a prayer of thanksgiving, I hugged him and left without ever knowing his name or his life story until the next Sunday during

Sunday School. I was relating my experience when a man in my class said, "I know this man. I worked with him for years. He died this past week from complications of a prolonged illness. I went to his funeral." We all went completely silent. Words were not necessary to express the gratitude we all felt that God in his faithful love had shown this man that he was not facing death alone. God was with him and was offering his comforting grace through the Body of his Son, Jesus Christ.

I always feel God's love, mercy and grace each time I receive Holy Communion, but words can never express the gratitude I felt for being "a useful vessel "of God's love, mercy, and grace by serving Eucharist to this man, a stranger to me, but not to God!

Prayer: God, you are indeed a father to the fatherless, a friend to the forgotten and forlorn. You hear the cries of your children's hearts even when silent or barely audible. Thank you for using me, a vessel of clay, and turning me into a useful vessel sent to share your love, mercy, and grace with a dying stranger to me but a one of your children. May I never fear responding in love to any opportunity to be a useful vessel to serve those most precious to you. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Pastor Linda Shelton