

The Village Idiot

As you make the turn from Oak Street to Main, you'll pass by Lee's Diner. It's a small friendly place where locals can get a good home-cooked style meal or just a slice of Rosie's pie with a cup of coffee. To the newcomer that may happen by, one can't help but notice the shiny red bicycle chained to the awning post in front of the diner. As the newcomer walks into the diner, he may be surprised by the loud voice he hears coming from over in the corner. "I made 50 cents today selling cans! That's the best that I ever done before!" The loud voice is coming from Randy, a short, balding man in his forties whose clothes just don't seem to fit just right. I suppose that most small towns have a Randy, and they are as much a part of the town's character as is the old post office or school building. To the unsympathetic observer Randy may seem like a bother, a nuisance, a source of discomfort for those who find it difficult to be around those who are different. Names like dope, dimwit and village idiot are used in a hateful way. But with a closer examination of Randy one would most certainly find a wonderful source of inspiration.

Randy is always busy, though he doesn't have a regular job he is constantly seeking ways in which to support himself. He mows grass, sweeps leaves and works any odd job that needs to be done. Those that know Randy call on him when they need extra help because no one works as hard as Randy. He is also a member of the local church, having obeyed the Gospel many years ago when one of the elders taught him about Jesus. Randy never misses a church service, never misses a fellowship meal, and never misses a Gospel meeting. He's always there, always ready to help. No one can count the number of times that he has carried groceries for over 2 miles to the widow Gentry's house. Randy was the one who crawled under the baptistery to retrieve the dead rat that was making the church house reek with an unbearable odor. He always goes and visits families who have had a death and always says, "God loves you and I hope He helps you not to cry no more".

We who are members of the church must realize how essential doing good works are. It is the one avenue in which others can see Jesus through our actions (*Matthew 5:16*). By being involved in doing good we have a positive influence (whether we realize it or not) on those who are not saved. By being active in doing good, we must be happy like Randy, always smiling and saying, "I hope you don't cry no more." Do you share the joy of your salvation with others through your good works? If you've let yourself become self-centered, then today is the day to refocus your life. Jesus lived and died for others and we are to follow His example through doing good for our neighbor with love as the motivating factor. "*But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.*" (*1 John 2:5-6*)

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