

The Ant and the Grasshopper—Refold

By Tammy
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At a certain primary school during their weekly class on morals, a group of first-grade students were asked to finish the story of the hardworking ant and the lazy grasshopper in the way they thought would be best.

Most of us know this story—one of Aesop’s fables—how the Grasshopper wasted the summer months playing his fiddle while the Ant labored hard storing food for the winter. When cold finally came, the industrious Ant and his friends were all safely tucked away with all that they would need, while the Grasshopper was left to search for food and found himself dying of hunger.

The six-year-olds were asked to draw a picture of and rewrite the ending of the story in any way they would like, but it needed to involve the Grasshopper asking the Ant for help. About half of the first-graders took the general view that since the Grasshopper was undeserving, the Ant refused to help him. The other half changed the end to say that the Ant told the Grasshopper to learn his lesson, and then he gave the Grasshopper half of what he had.

Then a little boy stood up and gave this version of the tale: After the Grasshopper came to the Ant

and begged for food, the Ant unhesitatingly gave all the food he had. Not half or most, but *everything*. The boy was not finished, however, and he cheerfully continued: “The Ant didn’t have any food left, so he died. But then the Grasshopper was so sad that the Ant had died that he told everyone what the Ant had done to save his life. And the Grasshopper became a good Grasshopper.”

Two things came to mind when this story was related to me. First it reminded me what giving meant to Jesus. He didn’t go halfway for us, and He didn’t say we were “undeserving,” but He gave His all so that we could learn to be good. It was only through Him totally sacrificing His life that we were able to receive the gift of eternal life. It was just the way the Ant died for the Grasshopper in the six-year-old’s retelling of the classic tale. And for us it should also not end there. In gratitude, we should follow His example and give our all to tell of the wonderful thing He did for us.

Second, I learned what it means to give your all. It is not true giving unless it hurts, but when you do truly give it will be multiplied many times over. “Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone.” But it doesn’t end there. Here is the bittersweet promise that makes it all worthwhile: “But if it die it bringeth forth much fruit” (John 12:24 KJV).

No man is so poor as to have nothing worth giving.

—Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

O Master, may I seek not so much to be comforted as to comfort,

To be understood as to show understanding,

To be loved as to love;

For it is in giving that we receive,

And in forgiving that we shall be forgiven,

In dying that we shall rise up to life eternal.

—Saint Francis of Assisi (1182–1286)

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