

**ONE THOUSAND DAYS OF LOVE**  
**Advent 2 – December 8, 2019**  
MAUREEN BELOTE  
CHURCH OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD, DUNEDIN, FL

Isaiah 11

“Righteousness will be the belt around his hips.”

What does this mean?

In [Luke 3:7-9](#) John the Baptist called for repentance and righteous behavior such as is pleasing to God

What is righteousness? It is being just and right with God. The dictionary defines it as "the quality of being morally correct and justifiable." [1] It can also be considered synonymous with "rightness" or being "upright"

***Today I will ask you to do something righteous, something just.***

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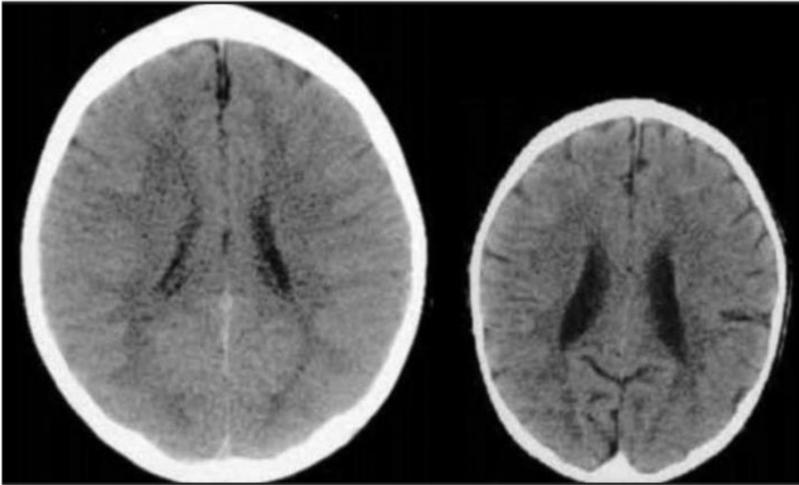
Each of us has loved a three year old. I want you close your eyes and picture one near and dear to you, a memory perhaps of your own child when they were 3, or a grandchild. (pause) Got it? Are they smiling...loving?

I'm sure the child you pictured in your heart would be represented by the fully developed child.

## **The First Thousand Days is Crucial**

When we add the nine months of in-utero development together with the first two years of the baby's post-natal life, we are exploring these first 1000 days when the infant's brain, particularly the right-brain, is expanding at a **phenomenal** rate. Research shows that it is the right hemisphere of the brain that is largely responsible for emotional and body-based regulation. This is when children learn how it feels to be a human being, if and how they are special, loved, or worthy, what to expect from relationships, and whether their world is secure or insecure.

Look at the difference between the brain of a child with good social and nutritional support, on the left, and the that of a deprived child, on the right:



You may remember DANI, a 7 year old with the cognitive level of a 2 year old, who weighed just 40 pounds due to malnutrition. This nationally reported story, happened in Plant City, FL. When found, she was cowering in a corner, fearful, like an animal. We don't know specifically what happened in her first 1000 days, but evidence suggests she was badly neglected until she was found. A follow up report of her at age 15 showed the deprivations continue to have lifelong consequences.

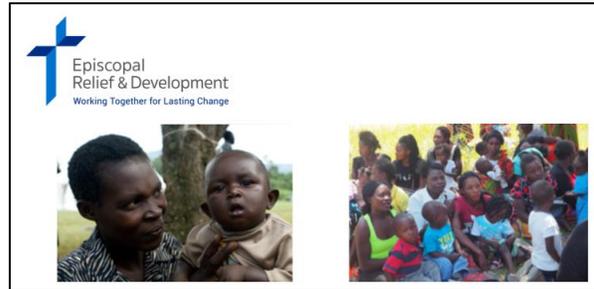
Children need both nutritional and positive social interactions to thrive.

THE SADDEST THING is that, according to scientific studies, the difference cannot be made up after the first 1000 days!! REPEAT  
That crucial development window closes just short of a child's third birthday.

My mother had a framed adage on her dresser that she occasionally brought to my attention. **"An unkind word is like a killing frost. No matter how much it warms up later, the damage is already done."** Nutritional and social deprivation in the first 1000 days, like a killing frost, cannot be undone.

## GOOD NEWS!

Episcopal Relief & Development has launched a mission to help prevent these “killing frosts.”



ONE THOUSAND DAYS OF LOVE is a \$3 million grassroots Church-wide fundraising campaign dedicated to expanding the organization’s global programs, improving the lives of children up to age six. Episcopal Relief & Development invites individuals, congregations, and dioceses to join ONE THOUSAND DAYS OF LOVE by engaging in acts of love of their own.

(MATCHING GIFTS) Thanks to a generous group of donors, for the second year in a row, contributions that Episcopal Relief & Development received between now and the end of the year will be doubled, dollar for dollar, up to a total of \$1 million in matching gifts.—

I picked up a book at the Friends of the Library sale from the Christmas collections. In it, I discovered the EIGHT LEVELS OF CHARITABLE GIVING, based on the teachings of Maimonides.

### **FROM THE TEACHINGS OF RABBI MAIMÓNIDES**

- 1. Giving reluctantly in the least amount and sometimes with resentment.**
- 2. Giving graciously, but less than one should.**
- 3. Giving what one should, but only after being asked.**
- 4. Giving before being asked.**
- 5. Giving without knowing to whom they give, although the recipient knows the identity of the donor.**
- 6. Giving without making their identity known.**
- 7. Giving without knowing to whom they give; the recipient does not know from whom they receive.**
- 8. Helping another to become self-supporting by a gift or a loan or by finding employment for the recipient.**

**The 8 Levels of Charitable Giving.** *We all give at each level.. from tossing change or a dollar into the red kettle, to the highest level, where we don't know who will receive the gift, nor will the receiver know who gave it; but it significantly affects the course of a life. All of these are a way of being righteous, but the one that reflects the kind of righteousness... the kind that God practices with us, ....is the highest one.*

*I love giving and getting gifts from family and friends and welcoming them we get together.*



**So welcome each other, in the same way that Christ also welcomed you, for God's glory. Romans 15:7**

*Paul tells us to welcome each other in the same way that Christ welcomed us, for God's glory. What better way to truly and righteously welcome a new child made in the image of God and to glorify the God who made us all, than to help children develop fully as God intended, know they are special, loved and worthy.*

Being righteous is being right with God. You can be right with God if you celebrate Jesus' birthday by giving a gift fit for the holy child of Bethlehem and little children we don't know. Next week we will have an ALTERNATIVE GIFTS BAZAAR. Look for gifts that can be given at the highest levels of Maimonides' list... Gifts that can help someone achieve their full potential, to be independent. Included will be the GIFTS FOR LIFE catalogs, full of opportunities to change lives. This year, in support of the 1000 Days of Love mission, I encourage you to consider a gift that will help a mother learn how to care for her babies nutritionally **and** socially.

Concrete gifts that answer prayer are at the highest levels of charity and are surely the buckle on the belt of righteousness.

When I first heard this prayer, it was on a tv serial! It so moved me that I had to find it. I hope it will touch you as much as it does me

## "We Pray for Children" by Ina Hughes

We pray for children  
Who put chocolate fingers everywhere,  
Who like to be tickled,  
Who stomp in puddles and ruin their new pants,  
Who sneak Popsicles before supper,  
Who erase holes in math workbooks,  
Who can never find their shoes.

And we pray for those  
Who stare at photographers from behind barbed wire,  
Who can't bound down the street in new sneakers,  
Who never "counted potatoes,"  
Who are born in places we wouldn't be caught dead in,  
Who never go to the circus,  
Who live in an X-rated world.

We pray for children  
Who bring us sticky kisses and fistfuls of dandelions,  
Who sleep with the cat and bury goldfish,  
Who hug us in a hurry and forget their lunch money,  
Who squeeze toothpaste all over the sink,  
Who slurp their soup.

And we pray for those  
Who never get dessert,  
Who have no safe blanket to drag behind them,  
Who can't find any bread to steal,  
Who don't have any rooms to clean up,  
Whose pictures aren't on anybody's dresser,  
Whose monsters are real.

We pray for children  
Who spend all their allowance before Tuesday,  
Who throw tantrums in the grocery store and pick at their food,  
Who like ghost stories,  
Who shove dirty clothes under the bed,  
Who get visits from the tooth fairy,  
Who don't like to be kissed in front of the car pool,  
Who squirm in church and scream on the phone,  
Whose tears we sometimes laugh at and whose smiles can make us cry.

And we pray for those  
Whose nightmares come in the daytime,  
Who will eat anything,  
Who have never seen a dentist,  
Who are never spoiled by anyone,  
Who go to bed hungry and cry themselves to sleep,  
Who live and move, but have no being.

We pray for children  
Who want to be carried  
And for those who must,  
For those we never give up on  
And for those who never get a second chance,  
For those we smother.  
And for those who will grab the hand of anybody kind  
enough to offer it.

We pray for children.

Amen? (encourage people to give a resounding AMEN!)