

Love Your Neighbor

"Happy birthday, dear Thomas. Happy birthday to you!"

It was Thomas's birthday, and today he would be six. He had been looking forward to this day for a long time.

His best friend Zuri had come to his party, as had many of Thomas's friends and family. The table in the living room was stacked high with birthday presents. But he knew what he liked best of all—the shiny black-and-white soccer ball! Now Thomas would have two soccer balls!

"I can use one to play with Daddy, and one to play with Pup."



After the guests had left the house, Mother and Father and older sister Kate looked at all the toys piled high in the living room.

"Where will we put all of your new toys?" said Mother with a laugh. "Your closet won't hold them all."

"Maybe we can give away the toys you are no longer playing with," said Father. "That would make some children very happy."

Thomas nodded. He liked to make people happy.

The next day, as Thomas walked to the nearby park with Mother and Pup, he saw Zuri playing soccer in the park. The ball that Zuri and his friends were kicking around looked worn and partly deflated.



Thomas looked at the ball he had carried to the park. He still had his brand-new soccer ball at home. If he gave this one to Zuri and his friends, it would make them so happy. "Mother, may I give this ball to Zuri? I have another one at home."

"That is very thoughtful of you," said Mother. "Yes, I think that will make Zuri and his friends very happy."

"Zuri, would you like to have this soccer ball?" asked Thomas as he approached Zuri.

"Oh, that would be the best!" said Zuri.

Zuri and Thomas spent a fun-filled afternoon playing soccer together with friends.



“Thomas, I’m so proud of you for giving your ball to Zuri. You made him very happy,” said Father during supper that evening.

“I made Jesus happy too,” said Thomas. “I remembered the Bible verse about ‘loving our neighbors,’ and Zuri is our neighbor—he lives two houses away!”

“That’s true, son,” said Father. “And did you know that the Bible also tells us that our neighbor is anyone who needs our help? A long time ago, a man asked Jesus about what it meant to ‘love your neighbor.’ This man knew that God wanted him to love his neighbor, but he didn’t know who that was. So Jesus told him the story of the Good Samaritan.”



For the full story, see Luke 10:25–37.

"I remember that story," said Thomas eagerly. "It's the one about the man who was traveling to Jericho, and some bad people robbed him and left him on the side of the road hurting. And then people passed by without helping—but then a Samaritan came and took care of him."

"Yes, that's right. Jesus wanted us to know that we should be like that Good Samaritan, always ready to help others. We're to show kindness not only to those who live near us, but to anyone who needs it."

"I want to be like that," said Thomas.

"So do I," said Father.

The next day, as Thomas entered the park, he saw a lady picking up cans and litter.



"Mother, do you think that lady needs help cleaning up the park?" asked Thomas.

"I'm so proud of you for noticing! Let's go ask," said Mother.

After they had approached the lady, she smiled and thanked Thomas. "That is very kind of you to offer, little man. I could surely use the help."

Helping others made Thomas so happy. He was glad he could be a Good Samaritan for others. Thomas had enjoyed a great week full of joy he received from doing things for others.

The End

Verse: A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. (John 13:34 NIV)



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