

## **“If When You Give the Best of Your Service”**

**Inspired by the spirit of Deuteronomy 15:4–11 and Matthew 25:42–45.**



The rain had been falling since dawn, turning the sidewalks of the Multi-Center into slick mirrors. Raymond pulled his hood tighter as he hurried toward the community center. He wasn't late...Raymond was never late, but he hated the feeling of being unprepared, and today's meeting mattered.

Inside, Flint was already pacing the lobby, his arms crossed, guitar strapped around his shoulder, his expression sharp enough to cut glass.

“Ray, finally,” Flint said. “We need to talk about Bobby.”

Raymond exhaled. “What happened now?”

Flint gestured toward the window, where Bobby sat on the curb, soaked through, clutching a paper bag like it was treasure. “He's been sleeping behind the grocery store again. People are complaining. We can't keep enabling him.”

Raymond looked at Bobby; thin, tired, but smiling faintly at a stray cat rubbing against his leg. “He's not a problem to be solved, Flint. He's a person.”

Flint shook his head. “We've given him food, money, rides, blankets. At some point, he has to help himself.”

Raymond didn't argue. He simply stepped outside.



### **A Conversation in the Rain**

“Bobby,” Raymond said gently, crouching beside him. “You’re freezing. Come inside.”

Bobby looked up, eyes bright despite everything. “I’m okay, Ray. Just waiting for the rain to ease up.”

“You don’t have to wait out here.”

Bobby hesitated. “I don’t want to be a burden.”

“You’re not,” Raymond said. “You never were.”

Bobby’s throat tightened. “Flint doesn’t think so.”

Raymond smiled softly. “Flint’s scared. Sometimes fear sounds like frustration.”

### **Inside the Community Center**

Flint was leaning against the counter when they walked in. Bobby paused, unsure.

Flint cleared his throat. “Look... Bobby... I’m not trying to push you away. I just don’t know what else to do.”

Bobby nodded slowly. “I know. And I’m trying, Flint. I really am.”

Raymond stepped between them, not as a barrier but as a bridge.

“You know,” he said, “I was reading something last night. About how there will always be people in need, and how we’re called to open our hands anyway. Not because it’s easy. Not because it’s convenient. But because it’s right.”

Flint sighed. “Ray, we can’t fix the whole world.”

“No,” Raymond said. “But we can love the part of it standing in front of us.”

Flint looked at Bobby, really looked at him perhaps for the first time in weeks. The exhaustion. The hunger. The quiet dignity.

“Alright,” Flint said. “Let’s start again.”

### **A Small Act, A Big Shift**

Raymond grabbed towels and a clean sweatshirt from the donation closet. Flint heated soup in the kitchen. Bobby sat at the table, hands trembling slightly as warmth returned to his fingers.

“You know,” Bobby said, “I didn’t expect any of this today.”

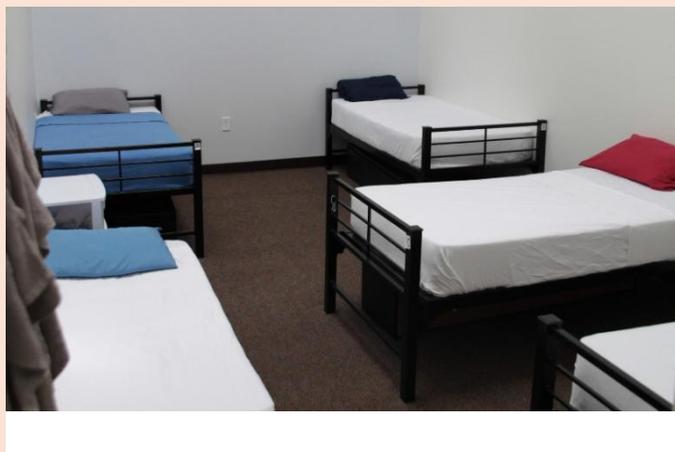
Flint set the bowl in front of him. “Nobody should be left out in the cold. Not on my watch.”

Bobby smiled. “Thank you.”

Raymond leaned against the counter, watching the two men who had become like brothers to him. “This is what it’s about,” he said quietly. “Seeing each other. Helping each other. Not turning away.”

Flint nodded. “Yeah. I guess when we ignore someone in need, we’re ignoring more than just a person.”

“Exactly,” Raymond said. “It’s like turning away from something sacred.”



### **Moving A HEADD Later That Night**

The rain finally stopped. Bobby had a cot in the shelter, a warm meal in his stomach, and for the first time in a long while, he had hope.

As Raymond locked up, Flint joined him at the door.

“You were right,” Flint said. “About opening our hands.”

Raymond shrugged. "We're all learning."

Flint smirked. "You think Bobby knows how much he teaches us?"

Raymond smiled. "Probably more than we realize."

They stepped into the quiet street, the air fresh and clean after the storm.

"Tomorrow," Raymond said, "let's see what else we can do."

Flint nodded. "Yeah. Tomorrow, everything in us that is sinful has got to come out again!"