

MERCES MARQUEZ

J.D. Tant, adapted

Merces Marquez came to America from Bolivia when she was nearly 80 years old. She came with few possessions, and evidently acquired little while here. She did acquire one great possession through a benefactor. His name was Jesus Christ. She learned and obeyed the gospel at the age of 87. She was so grateful for this gift, that she served him tirelessly right up to the last day of her life just short of her 100th birthday. An elder from her congregation in Miami, Florida wrote the following:

“Our congregation just lost a saint, who was a benefactress, although she died with only \$57 in her checking account, and yet had her offering for the Lord’s Day already written out ahead of time for \$55. On the envelope she had written, ‘Thank You Gift for Lord Jesus!’ She had nothing, and gave it all away! She arrived each week an hour before most of us and had the Lord’s Table prepared. She also insisted upon coordinating cleanup after our Sunday services in our borrowed meeting place because she wanted it to be done in a way that reflected deep appreciation for those who shared their school for our congregation on Sundays. I asked Merces one Sunday why she worked so hard when she came to the gatherings. Her response was, ‘I am making up for lost time, because the Lord Jesus found me only 12 years ago, and this is my way of saying, ‘Thank you!’”

At 99 she was still working six days a week, and yet she received no public assistance. At 6:27 a.m. on a recent Tuesday, she was struck by a speeding young driver. She died on the scene. Our little congregation claimed her body because we were the only “next of kin” she had. She was buried in a borrowed grave and all funeral expenses were paid by donations from Christians. Merces was much of the heart of our congregation of less than 100 members. Almost three times that number attended her funeral, however; people from all over the city who were served by her hands as she worked 60 hours a week weeding gardens, cleaning houses, and caring for both little children and older disabled men and women (who were much younger than she). On the Lord’s Day following her burial, one of our shepherds placed two special offerings onto the table—they were Merces’ check for \$55 (still in its envelope) and her coin purse, which was found among her few possessions, with \$1.37 inside. The congregation burst into tears!”

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That brought tears to my eyes as I read the story of this dear sister. Does this remind you of someone in the Bible, like the widow who gave all she had? *“And He sat down opposite the treasury, and [began] observing how the multitude were putting money into the treasury; and many rich people were putting in large sums. And a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which amount to a cent. And calling His disciples to Him, He said to them, ‘Truly I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all the contributors to the treasury; for they all put in out of their surplus, but she, out of her poverty, put in all she owned, all she had to live on’”* (Mark 12:41-44).

Merces’ story raises some questions for consideration.

How much time and effort do I put into serving the Lord as an expression of my thanksgiving for the great gift he has given me? Paul said, *“Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!”* (2nd Corinthians 9:15) How can we find adequate words to explain the fact that God became a man and gave up heaven’s glory to live among men, not as a king in a palace, but as a servant, for he said He *“did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many”* (Matthew 20:28)?

How many people will attend my funeral? That may seem like a strange question, but it relates to the influence Merces had on those she came in contact with in her daily life. With respect to influence, Jesus said we are the light of the world. *“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven”* (Matthew 5:14-16). Evidently, Merces had a pretty bright light, and the fact that so many people came to her funeral is a testimony to the fact that she touched their lives. Unless the Lord comes first, we will all attend our own funeral.

The number of people present will in one sense be a reflection on the number of people we touched in our lives. The neighbor we helped in a time of trouble; the waitress to whom we showed kindness; the family we took in when their house burned; the travelers we helped when their car broke down; the runaway teen we took in who escaped from abuse at home; the lost soul to whom we shared the gospel of Christ. I am sorry I never met Merces, but she has touched my life. I hope she has touched yours, as well.

**"WHAT MUST I DO
TO BE SAVED?"**

ACTS 16:30

LEARN THE GOSPEL

John 6:45; Romans 10:17

BELIEVE IN CHRIST

Hebrews 11:6; John 3:16

CONFESS CHRIST

Matthew 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10

REPENT OF SIN

Acts 3:19; 17:30

BE BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST

Mark 16:16; Romans 6:3-6

REMAIN STEADFAST

1st Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10

**"THE ASSEMBLING OF
OURSELVES TOGETHER"**

HEBREWS 10:24-25

SUNDAY

Worship @ 10:00 a.m.

Studies @ 11:45 a.m.

WEDNESDAY

Studies & Worship @ 7:00 p.m.

75 Sherrod Boulevard

Belén, New Mexico

Seekers Welcome.

Members Expected.

**"IF A MAN IS OVERTAKEN IN
ANY TRESPASS..."**

RESTORE SUCH A ONE"

GALATIANS 6:1

CONFESS TRESPASSES

James 5:16; 1st John 1:9

REPENT OF SIN

Acts 8:22

PRAY FOR FORGIVENESS

Acts 8:22

REMAIN STEADFAST

1st Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10

"A WORD FITLY SPOKEN IS

LIKE APPLES OF GOLD IN

SETTINGS OF SILVER"

PROVERBS 25:11

"Give your children big truths they will grow into, rather than light explanations they will grow out of."

– Tedd Tripp

"WHOLE COUNSEL"

ACTS 20:27

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"TO EVERYTHING THERE IS A SEASON"

Bryan Matthew Dockens

Winter, Spring, Summer, and Fall-
The Lord God created them all.
Each season fulfills its own need,
For which we give thanks indeed.

We give thanks for Winter snows,
Upon the mountain He bestows.
Later, snowmelt fills the river.
For this, we praise the Giver!

Thank God for showers of Spring,
Watering fields that later bring:
Flowers and trees, taking their root
To bless us with healthy fruit!

Summer's gratitude ascends
To the One on whom life depends
For the warm season's sun and heat
When winter's tasks are complete.

In Fall, the tree drops its leaf,
Reminding Christians of our belief
That through death life is renewed!
Vibrant lessons in climes subdued.

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