

Until a few days ago, Aaron Reis was unknown. Today he's known throughout the US if not the world. He's being hailed a hero because he was concerned about others and acted to do all he could to help them. He put his own interests aside to serve others. He is one of three coaches at Florida's Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School who sacrificed themselves sheltering students.

Mosiah 2:17 says, "When ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God." Christ is quoted in Mark 10:43-45 saying, "But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."

Very few of us are ever in a situation where we give up our lives to save someone else and we rightly honor soldiers, fireman and policeman that are and protect our freedoms and lives. We are all in situations where we serve others.

The most immediate service is to our families. Parents bring children into the world, feed and clothe them, and teach them. Children serve their parents when they honor and obey them. (Exodus 20:12 Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.) One of the greatest sacrifices any of us will give is to our elderly parents.

I need to tell you about my brother and his wife. They live in Colorado. For a decade they took care of their parents as they became more and more infirm with age. First Judy's mother lost her sight and needed special care before she died. Then my father died. Then my mother broke one hip and then the other hip. Through all of this Gale and Judy were there. I was 2000 miles away. My younger sister and brother were not in a position to be there all the time. Gale and Judy gave up vacations. They tolerated behavior that was intolerable. I am ever grateful for the sacrifices they made for our parents.

We serve our neighbors. Sometime just by little acts: Backing off to let someone into a lane of traffic. Holding a door for someone. Let me tell you about my wife. She's sensitive to people. We went to supermarket in Pennsylvania and she noticed a woman standing with several bags of groceries at her feet. When we came out with our own groceries, the woman was still there. We put our groceries in the car and left. About one block later, Sister Chadwick said, "We've got to go back." The woman was still waiting. Sister Chadwick asked, "Can we give you a ride." We could and did.

I'm most cognizant of a particular service because of my current calling. The young missionaries we are around each day are paragons of service. Their one purpose is service and they provide in many ways. First of all they teach people. Many of you are the recipients of missionary service when they come to your home and get their hands dirty helping around the house and yard. In the world, eighteen-, nineteen-, and twenty-year olds get jobs, go to college, date and, frankly, live selfish lives. LDS missionaries of that age teach religion and dig up weeds in old lady's yards.

Oftentimes an opportunity of service comes at an inconvenient time and place. That may be the time we have to be most Christ-like. When we have to put aside our schedule and meet the need of someone else. Paul in his letter to the Phillipian said, "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God."

Let me relate another story. Every weekday morning for twenty years I would walk to the New Dorp station on the Staten Island railroad. Take the train to the ferry to Manhattan and walk to my office. Every weekday afternoon I would reverse the trip. I remember on a single event that happened during those years of commuting. Well maybe two—the ferry got rammed by a freighter one morning in the fog. That was memorable. The other event was more personal. As I was walking home I turned the corner and there had been an accident. A motorist had hit a bicyclist. The bicyclist seemed to be OK. He was standing there and talking with other people. The motorist was not doing OK. She was hysterical. Sobbing and crying. People were standing around her just watching. One seemed to know how to proceed. The police hadn't come. There didn't seem to be a life-threatening injury. There wasn't a great deal of property damage. The bike wasn't even too badly damaged—the bicyclist was holding it up. But this woman was so upset at having hit him. I don't know what came over me. I am not generally like this. I walked up to the woman and simply held her. And for a relatively long time—several minutes until she calmed down. Then I left. To this day I know neither name of the bicyclist or the motorist nor what the disposition of the accident. I just continued on my walk home.

I came to the understanding that at this one time certainly, I was influenced by the spirit. As I said this is not like me to give hugs to strange women on the street.

Let me close with the scripture I quoted earlier. It's from King Benjamin's speech to his people and I want to read additional verse to put it in context:

"I say unto you that as I have been suffered to spend my days in your service, even up to this time, and have not sought gold nor silver nor any manner of riches of you; Neither have I suffered that ye should be confined in dungeons, nor that ye should make slaves one of another, nor that ye should murder, or plunder, or steal, or commit adultery; nor even have I suffered that ye should commit any manner of wickedness, and have taught you that ye should keep the commandments of the Lord, in all things which he hath commanded you—And even I, myself, have labored with mine own hands that I might serve you, and that ye should not be laden with taxes, and that there should nothing come upon you which was grievous to be borne—and of all these things which I have spoken, ye yourselves are witnesses this day. Yet, my brethren, I have not done these things that I might boast, neither do I tell these things that thereby I might accuse you; but I tell you these things that ye may know that I can answer a clear conscience before God this day. Behold, I say unto you that because I said unto you that I had spent my days in your service, I do not desire to boast, for I have only been in the service of God. And behold, I tell you these things that ye may learn wisdom; that ye may learn that when ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God. Behold, ye have called me your king; and if I, whom ye call your king, do labor to serve you, then ought not ye to labor to serve one another?"