

# Church of Christ

## ... Heart to Heart ...

Fiorello LaGuardia was the mayor of New York City during the worst days of the Great Depression and World War II. He was known as a man of colorful character. He would take entire orphanages to baseball games and, whenever the New York newspapers were on strike, he would go on the radio and read the funnies out of past newspapers to kids that were listening.

It was a bitterly cold night, January 1935. Mayor LaGuardia went to a night court that served the poorest ward of the city. LaGuardia dismissed the judge for the evening and took over the bench himself. Within a few minutes, a worn out, beaten down elderly lady was brought before him, charged with stealing a loaf of bread. She spoke in a shaky voice, telling Mayor LaGuardia that her daughter's husband had deserted her, her daughter was sick and her grandchildren were starving. The storekeeper, from whom the bread was stolen from, refused to drop the charges. *"It's a bad neighborhood, your Honor,"* the man spoke. *"She's got to be punished to teach other people around here a lesson!"*

LaGuardia turned to the woman and said, *"I have to be just and punish you! The law makes no exceptions - \$10 or 10 days in jail!"* The mayor reached into his pocket, took out \$10 and placed it into his famous sombrero. *"Here is your fine which I now remit! Furthermore, I am going to fine everyone in the courtroom 50 cents for living in a town where a person has to steal bread so that her grandchildren can eat! Mr. Bailiff, collect the fines and give them to the defendant!"*

The following day, the New York City newspaper reported \$47.50 was turned over to a bewildered old lady who had stolen a loaf of bread.

As I thought about the story, it reminds me of God and His grace toward mankind. We are in debt because of our sins (Rom. 6:23). God is just and righteous and His righteousness will not allow any sins overlooked. They must be punished to be paid in full. God reached deep within His heart and sent His Son on a death mission, to redeem (to buy back) us by paying the debt Himself (I Pet. 1:18-19).

Jesus demonstrated the grace of God and his love for us (Rom. 5:8-11). We didn't earn anything. We were buried and raised in baptism with Him (Rom. 6:3-5).

His grace, His love should affect us to the deepest part of our beings! We should be a reflection of His grace in the way our lives are lived before others (Titus 2:11-14). We sing, *"His grace reaches me."* Do we believe it? Do we live it? Think about it!!!

Brent