

BEGGING FOR MERCY

On a trip to a nearby city in Estonia, I saw a man begging for money. Amazingly, I recognized him from when I served as a missionary in that city 10 years earlier. He was carrying a big bag of plastic bottles, just as before, to collect for recycling money. I remembered he always asked for spare change, and if you gave him some he would ask if you had any more.

I was shocked to see him. And after 10 years he was still the same—a little more gray, but it looked like he had been living the same life begging for money day after day. I thought about the wonderful 10 years I had lived in the meantime, which included marrying in the temple, gaining an education, finding a good

job, and enjoying good health.

I figured this might be the last time I saw him, and I felt like I should give him something. The problem was I only had a bill that was worth more than I was willing to give. I cringed at the choice I had—give him nothing or give him more than I wanted. I decided it wouldn't really make a big difference for me and it would make his day, so I gave him the money.

Less than two days later I found myself in a similar situation, but this time I was the one begging for mercy. I had mixed up the date for an important scholarship application. I thought I had turned it in two weeks early, but I was horrified when I

double-checked the date and saw that I had sent it in one day late.

The sum of the scholarship was exactly 100 times the amount I had given to the beggar, and the irony was not lost on me. I found myself begging for mercy, both in prayer to my Heavenly Father and via email to the university officials. They said they would include the application but note it was late.

My prayer was answered and I was blessed to receive the scholarship, which financially helped my wife and me a lot. But more importantly this experience taught me a valuable lesson: are we not all beggars before God (see Mosiah 4:19)? ■

Matthew Crandall, Harju, Estonia

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