



Lydia's Thirsty Raspberries

By Sheila Kindred
(Based on a true story)

Charity is the pure love of Christ (Moroni 7:47).

The rain barrel is empty,”
said 10-year-old Lydia as she
wiped a plate dry. “May I use some
well water on my raspberry patch?”





*Lydia was worried about her raspberry patch.
But was something else more important?*

Lydia's mother sighed as she washed a bowl in the sink. "I'm afraid raspberries are a luxury during a drought. You may use the dish rinse water, but we need to save the well water."

Lydia frowned. Her raspberry jam had once won a blue ribbon at the Iowa State Fair. She didn't think her berries would be as delicious if she used dishwater on them.

Lydia's father came into the kitchen and sat down heavily. He wiped his sweaty forehead.

"Are you all right, Stephen?" Mother asked.

"I'm fine," Father said, "but I have some bad news. The well has finally gone dry."

Lydia felt a stab of worry. A lot of the neighbors' wells had already dried out. Mother twisted her apron in her hands.

"Don't despair," Father said gently, taking Mother's hand. "We still have the deeper windmill well out in the fields. I'm taking the tank truck there right now."

"May I go?" Lydia asked, suddenly feeling better. She was so glad they had that windmill!

"Yes," Mother said. "I'll save the rinse water for you."

"Thank you!" Lydia hurried outside. Maybe if she helped fetch the well water, Father would let her use some on the raspberries.

Father climbed into the truck, and they began their dusty drive to the far end of the fields. When they reached the windmill, Lydia sat up and stared. Several wagons and trucks lined the road, and a crowd of people stood around the well. All of them had tanks and barrels.

"What are they doing?"

Lydia asked.

Father narrowed his eyes.

"Getting water, it looks like."

"But it's our water!" Lydia said.

She imagined her raspberries drying out under the hot sun. "We need it. They can't just take it!"

Father parked the truck and hopped out. "Stay put, Lydia," he said.

The people around the well froze and silently watched Father approach.

Lydia couldn't hear what Father said, but when he finished talking, she was surprised that many of the people were smiling. Some even cried and shook Father's hand. Then they all worked together to fill all their barrels and tanks.

Lydia didn't understand. Why was Father doing this?

When the crowd left and Father began filling his own tank, Lydia climbed out.

"You gave away our water," Lydia muttered. Confusion and anger washed over her.

Lydia's father stooped down so he was face-to-face with Lydia. "Listen carefully, Lydia Lucille. I figure the water in this well is a gift from God. We no more own it than we own the air we breathe. As long as there is water in this well, we will share it with those in need."

Father then dipped a ladle into a bucket and handed it to Lydia. Gratefully she drank the cold, clean water. She thought about all the other people and how scary it must be for them to not have water of their own. She was glad her father decided to share.

Lydia scrambled back into the truck. She was anxious to get home and pour the dishwater on her thirsty berries. She might not get as many big, juicy raspberries this year.

But whatever she got, she would be sure to share. ♦

Even though many people used the windmill well on Lydia's farm during the summer drought of 1930, the well never ran out of water.



One day my family went to a river. We saw another family there. They had no water and looked really hot. We had some water bottles in our van, so I went over and gave them all of our water bottles. The dad said, "Thank you so much. You are very kind!" After that I felt good inside, and I knew I had done the right thing. That day my testimony of service grew. I know that the Savior is pleased when we serve each other.

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