FLORIE’S BIRTHDAY PARTY
(Children’s Story/Parable)*

May 13, 2017

Flore Swift would be eight years old tomorrow, and her mother had promised her the company of six young friends to take dinner with her and spend the afternoon. “You may invite whom you please,” mother said.

As soon as lessons were over, the girl went out, accompanied by Ann, the maid, to invite her guests. Ann thought, of course, that Florie would invite Fannie Morris, Jennie Snow, and two or three other close playmates. They lived in large houses on the next street, so Ann started to turn in that direction.

“Where are you going?” asked Florie. “The company I am going to invite don’t live there. Those girls have many good times.” On they walked until they came to a narrow street with a none-to-inviting appearance.

“I am going to stop here, said Florie. She opened a rickety door and began to climb the stairs. Stopping at the top of the first flight, she knocked at the door on her right. “Come in,” was faintly heard. Florie opened the door and found a girl about her own age sitting in a chair, knitting. This was Mary Gray, the daughter of a woman who had done sewing for Florie’s mother. The child was blind, but she held out her hand in the direction of Florie’s voice.

“Mrs. Gray,” Florie said, “I came to see if you would allow Mary to have dinner with me tomorrow. It is my birthday, and mamma has promised me a little party. I will send for Mary, if you are willing.”

“How good you are, Miss Florie!” the woman replied. “My little child has but few pleasures. I know she will enjoy her visit with you.”

“Thank you,” said Mary with a smile. “I’ll be waiting for the party.” “I will send for you, Mary, at three o’clock tomorrow.”

Bidding the mother and daughter good-by [sic], Florie went down the stairs and hurried along to another house, nearby, where a large boot hung out for a sign. Ann looked at Florie in amazement as she entered this little shop. An old man sat mending shoes, and a little lame boy propped up in a chair was trying to amuse himself with some bits of bright-colored leather.

“Well, Miss Florie,” exclaimed the child, “I am so glad you have come! Those roses you sent me a few days ago were so beautiful. I kept them as long as I could.”
“I’m glad you liked them, Jamie. I have come to invite you to dinner tomorrow, and you shall have as many roses as you can carry home.”

The little fellow glanced at his lame feet, and then at his crutches. “Never mind, Jamie,” the old shoemaker said. “I will carry you to Miss Florie’s.”

Flore now left for another home on a side street. She stopped at the door of a shabby-looking house, which was occupied by an old woman, formerly a nurse in Florie’s family.

“Bless you, Miss Florie, it does me good to see your bright face,” said the woman. “No one has been to read the story of the Good Shepherd since you were here, and my old eyes are of little service now.”

“Well, nursie, tomorrow will be my birthday, and you are to come to dinner with me. Then I’ll read to you if you wish.” “The precious child,” said the old woman, “to think of a poor old nurse!”

“Good-by [sic], nursie! I am not through inviting my friends yet.” Beckoning to Ann, Florie walked on a few doors farther and stopped at another home. A weak-looking child not much older than Florie came to the door with a crying baby in her arms.

“Why, Florie,” the child exclaimed, “whoever would have thought of seeing you!” “Where is your mother, Amy?”

“She is washing. The baby is so cross I can’t do anything with him. I could not go to church last week because he was not well.”

“Do you think your mother will let you come and have dinner with me tomorrow? It’s my birthday.”

By this time the woman appeared, and Florie asked; “Please, may Amy come to my house tomorrow afternoon? It will be my birthday. We are in the same Sabbath school class and I should like to have her.”

“Certainly, miss; I have no objections.” The mother and child both seemed happier to have Florie call.


Flore made her errand known to Mrs. White, and left, saying: “Bring him at three o’clock tomorrow, please.”

“Now for home!” said Florie. She ran to her room the moment she arrived and wrote this little note: “Flore Swift sends her compliments to Mrs. Swift, and would be pleased to have her company tomorrow afternoon.”
“Ann, please take this to mamma, and wait for an answer.” Ann soon returned with a small piece of paper, on which was written: “Mrs. Swift accepts with pleasure the invitation for tomorrow afternoon.”

The next day was bright and clear, and as three o’clock drew near, Florie began to arrange her table for the guests on the green lawn. A large dish of strawberries stood in the center, on one side a large cake, and on the other a plate of biscuits. A small bouquet of choice flowers stood by each plate. “Your company is coming,” said Ann, who was helping Miss Florie.

Sure enough, there was old nurse with her walking stick, and Jamie on the shoemaker’s back. Blind Mary was the next to come, and soon Amy and little mute Tommy appeared. Seating old nurse in a large chair brought out especially for her, Florie put the rest of her guests on her right and left. Mary smelled the flowers, and was delighted with them. Mrs. Swift now came into the yard, looking somewhat astonished at the company. She greeted each one pleasantly, and sat at the head of the table.

When dinner was over, Mrs. Swift invited everyone to the parlor, where she played and sang for them. Each one had a bouquet to take home, and when they left they said, “Thank you,” over and over.

When they were alone, Mrs. Swift asked Florie why she had invited these friends to her party.

“Mother, our teacher told us last Sabbath that God said, ‘Feed the hungry, lead the lame, and help the needy,’ or something like that. Did I do right, mother?”

“Yes, daughter. I’m happy that you thought of others.” “Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the Lord” (Proverbs 19:17, NIV).