

Mornin' ya'll



Ugly and the Lesson of Love

Not sure where I first heard the story of Ugly, but I'll pass it on. Do you have a picture of sacrificial love?

Everyone in the apartment complex knew who Ugly was. Ugly was the resident tomcat. Ugly loved three things in this world: fighting, eating garbage, and serenading all night.

The combination of these things combined with a life spent outside had their effect on Ugly. To start with, he had only one eye, and where the other should have been was a gaping hole. He was also missing his ear on the same side, his left foot has appeared to have been badly broken at one time, and had healed at an unnatural angle, making him look like he was always turning the corner. Ugly would have been a dark gray tabby striped-type, except for the scars covering his head, neck, and even his shoulders. Every time someone saw Ugly there was the same reaction. "That's one UGLY cat!!"

All the children were warned not to touch him, but whenever he spied children, he would come running meowing frantically and bump his head against their hands, begging for their love. If ever someone picked him up he would immediately begin a purring sound that sounded more like a chainsaw with a bad sparkplug.

One day a snarling dog, having broken its chain, charged the playing group of children. Before it could reach the children, Ugly sank claws and teeth into its face. From my apartment I could hear the screams, and I tried to rush to his aid. By the time I got to where he was laying, it was apparent Ugly's sad life was almost at an end.

Ugly lay in a wet circle, his back legs and lower back twisted grossly out of shape, a gaping tear in the white strip of fur that ran down his front. As I picked him up and tried to carry him home I could hear him wheezing and gasping, and could feel him struggling. "I must be hurting him terribly," I thought. Then I felt a familiar tugging, sucking sensation on my ear.

Ugly, in so much pain, suffering and obviously dying was trying to say thank you. I pulled him closer to me, and he bumped the palm of my hand with his head, then he turned his one golden eye towards me, and I could hear the distinct sound of purring. Even in the greatest pain, that ugly battled scarred cat was asking only for a little affection, perhaps some compassion.

At that moment I thought Ugly was the most beautiful, loving creature I had ever seen. The children and I sat transfixed on Ugly's final breath. Never once did he try to bite or scratch me, or even try to get away from me, or struggle in any way. Ugly just looked up at me completely trusting in me to relieve his pain.

Ugly died in my arms, but I sat and held him for a long time afterwards, thinking about how one scarred, deformed little stray could so alter my opinion about what it means to love with sacrifice.

I do. Romans 5:6-10

Dwight Dell

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