

ACTS OF KINDNESS

REACHING THEIR HEARTS THROUGH HIS

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SCRIPTURES

Romans 15:14-22

PURPOSE

To inspire people in doing good as a witness to Christ.

INTRODUCTION

1. Paul, the apostle, communicated the Gospel, the Good News, about Jesus in a variety of ways.
 - a. He witnessed to what Christ did in saving him by using words.
 - b. He proclaimed with appreciation how he was rescued from sin's grasp.
2. Paul also influenced others by how he lived his life and by what he did for others.
3. Jesus provided a premier example of the same behavior, for the scripture says, "He went about doing good" (Acts 10:38).
4. Followers of Jesus picked up on this same theme.
 - a. His disciple, John, plainly says, "Anyone who does what is good is from God" (III John 11).
 - b. "In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven" (Mt. 5:16).
 - c. James, Jesus' half brother, saw that people were claiming to possess faith in God, but their actions did not show it.
 - (1) "Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world" (James 1:27).
 - (2) A major theme in his writing was, "faith without works is dead."
DVD "Faith without Works"

I. THE IMPORTANCE OF DOING GOOD IS FOUND IN GOD WHO APPOINTS PRIESTS TO DO HIS WORK.

- A. Paul performed good deeds as a priestly duty (16).
 - 1. God appointed priests to do His work.
 - 2. Paul saw proclaiming the good news as a priestly duty.
 - 3. A priest was also in charge of offerings.
 - 4. As priest he celebrated the atonement—administering forgiveness.

- B. Paul gloried in what Christ accomplished through him (18).
 - 1. Paul did not engage in self-promotion, but in what Christ did through him.
 - 2. For Paul his greatest service to God was the salvation of the Gentiles.
 - 3. One of the influences of bringing salvation to the Gentiles was doing good.
 - # He believed bringing the Gentiles to God was a pleasing offering.

- C. Paul concluded the Gospel was not fully proclaimed until good deeds fortified his witness/proclamation (19).
 - 1. Paul led the Gentiles to believe in God by his acts of kindness among them.
 - 2. The Gentiles were influenced to obey God by Paul's deeds.
 - 3. Our good deeds must be done among those who do not follow Jesus.
 - 4. Good News couples with good works to speak of God.

II. THE IMPACT OF GOOD DEEDS.

- A. What did Paul do to influence unbelieving people?
 - 1. He worked at a job (Acts 20:33-35).
 - a. He did not want to be dependent upon others for a salary.
 - b. He did not leave himself open to criticism about money.
 - c. He sewed canvas for tents.
 - d. In making tents he influenced tentmakers to come to Christ.
 - # Priscilla and Aquila became believers and ministers.
 - 2. He helped people understand God, the church and the Bible.
 - a. Imagine the confusion about Jesus.
 - b. The Jews were wondering how Jesus fit into their theology.
 - c. With so many competing philosophies, Paul's keen mind was needed to help people navigate their way through the confusing ideas.
 - 3. He unified people around the person of Christ.
 - a. "For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified" (I Cor. 2:2).

- b. “Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God” (Eph. 5:1-2).
 - c. He served as a unifying influence amid much diversity.
 - d. He encouraged people (Acts 20:1-2).
4. He developed leaders who multiplied his ministry.
 # Paul travelled with men who learned from him and then led others (Acts 20:4-6).

B. The Gentiles were led to believe by his good deeds.

- 1. Leadership is the exchange of trust.
- 2. The Gentiles obeyed God because they saw Paul’s character and concern expressed through his kindness.
- 3. Loving acts build trust and may change character.
- 4. Our good deeds testify to God’s goodness.

CONCLUSION

- 1. No verbal statements about God and Christ are sufficient witness.
- 2. Our actions must give support to what we say.
- 3. We cannot explain how defiant pronouncements and condescending attitudes draw unbelievers to God.
- 4. When we share the love of God through acts of kindness, our message takes on authenticity and relevance.
- 5. When our salvation results in changed attitudes and caring ways, we become credible.

How convincing is the Christian who asks forgiveness of those wronged by sin.

We are impressed when genuine caring is expressed through a gift given, help offered or an act of mercy.

The New Testament Christians by their behavior left people marveling, “How they love one another!”

While working on this sermon a newsletter came from my health insurance company extolling the health benefits of doing acts of kindness. Here are the suggestions:

- 1. **Give a smile.** A simple smile can go a long way to lift someone's spirits. Whether it's a neighbor, a co-worker, or someone standing in front of you in the checkout line at the grocery store, giving a genuinely warm smile can make both of you feel good, inside and out.
- 2. **Do a chore or run an errand.** We all know someone who could use a helping hand from time to time. You could offer to dust and vacuum for a busy friend, drive an elderly neighbor to a doctor appointment, or simply give the gift of time and a listening ear. Whatever you do for that person, the time spent will be a gift to both of you.
- 3. **Send a thoughtful note or email.** Instead of waiting for a special occasion like a birthday or anniversary, send someone a quick note to express how much you appreciate them, how

proud you are of them, or simply to thank them for something they've done for you. You never know ... your note might arrive on a day when that person truly needs to hear kind words of encouragement.

4. Donate food. Put together a care package or grocery bag filled with canned and nonperishable foods from your cupboards and donate to a homeless shelter or someone in need. Your generosity will not only nurture the bodies and spirits of those less fortunate, it will warm your heart knowing you made a difference.

5. Teach someone a new skill. We all have talents and skills we can share with others. Perhaps you're an accomplished seamstress, an experienced carpenter, or you're known among family and friends as an excellent cook. Sharing your skills with someone else can be fun and offer lasting rewards for both of you.

6. Redirect gifts. Instead of buying you gifts for your birthday or special holidays, ask your family and friends to donate the money to charity. You'll be helping others in need; plus, it will give you and your loved ones an opportunity to experience the satisfaction and rewards of giving.

7. Offer respite to a caregiver. Do you have a family member, friend or neighbor who is a full-time caregiver to a loved one who is mentally or physically disabled? Give the caregiver a short — and much-needed — break by spending a few hours with the disabled person. Free time to rest or tend to personal needs is one of the most valuable gifts a caregiver can receive, and one of the most gratifying for you to give.