

Showing God's Love in Practical Ways

I. WE ARE CALLED TO DO WORKS OF JUSTICE AND TO LOVE MERCY

- A. The prophet Micah gave one of the best summaries of the kingdom lifestyle. We are called to be workers of justice and lovers of mercy with a spirit of humility. This is how God wants us to live. This is what He will require from us at the judgment seat of Christ (2 Cor. 5:10). Doing justice speaks of doing works that meet the practical needs of people including caring for the lonely, feeding the poor, helping the needy, orphans, widows, the homeless, etc.
- ⁸***He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God? (Mic. 6:8)***
- B. Loving people is a visible measurement and reflection of our love for God (1 Jn. 3:17-19; 4:20).
- ¹⁰***God is not unjust to forget your...love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints... (Heb. 6:10)***
- ¹⁷***But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? ¹⁸My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. (1 Jn. 3:17-18)***
- C. We are to be zealous for good works—this includes helping in a spontaneous way as needs arise as well as being open to work with others to start “ministries” to do works on a regular basis.
- ¹⁴***...who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works. (Titus 2:14)***
- D. If we ask, God will give us creative ideas on how we can help people in need in an on-going way. We must think outside the box without being limited to what is currently happening.
- ¹⁰***We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. (Eph. 2:10)***
- E. We will never meet *all* the needs in our hurting world, but we can make a difference in the lives of *some* by doing small acts of compassion. We must not be intimidated by the obstacles.

II. NEW TESTAMENT EXAMPLES OF OUR CALLING TO ACTS OF MERCY

- A. Jesus taught us to show mercy or compassion by doing acts of kindness to those in need.
- ³⁰***...“A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. ³¹Now by chance a priest came down that road. And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. ³²Likewise a Levite ...came and looked, and passed by on the other side. ³³But a Samaritan... saw him, he had compassion. ³⁴So he went to him and bandaged his wounds...brought him to an inn, and took care of him. ³⁵On the next day...he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said to him, ‘Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you.’ ...Jesus said to him, “Go and do likewise.” (Lk 10:30-35)***

- B. John the Baptist prepared the way of Messiah by calling people to walk in kindness and justice.
- ⁴...***"The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the LORD ...'"***¹⁰***So the people asked him, saying, "What shall we do then?"***¹¹...***"He who has two tunics, let him give to him who has none; and he who has food, let him do likewise."***¹²***Then tax collectors... [asked], "Teacher, what shall we do?"***¹³***And he said to them, "Collect no more than what is appointed for you."***¹⁴***Likewise the soldiers asked him, saying, "And what shall we do?" So he said to them, "Do not intimidate anyone or accuse falsely, and be content with your wages."*** (Lk 3:4, 10-14)
1. ***The people*** (v. 10) were called to share their resources (food and clothing).
 2. ***Tax gatherers*** (v. 12) were exhorted to be honest with people in their financial dealings and not to manipulate the numbers.
 3. ***Soldiers*** (v. 14) were to use their authority to help others honestly and in humility. Some intimidated people with threats of prison and accused them falsely in seeking a bribe.
- C. The Church is to make God's glory known by doing simple acts of kindness.
- ⁹***But you are...His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him...***¹¹***I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul,***¹²***having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles [unbelievers], that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God...***¹⁵***This is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men. (1 Pet. 2:9-15)***
1. ***They speak against you as evildoers:*** Some people are naturally suspicious, critical, and prejudiced against believers. They accuse the Church of being no different than they are. They believe that biblical doctrines are wrong and that our real motives are to do evil.
 2. ***Put to silence:*** God's plan is to silence the accusation of people against Jesus and the Church by believers consistently doing good deeds in a spirit of meekness. In due time, good works will triumph over the false accusations and arguments against God's people.
 3. ***Good works which they observe:*** Unbelievers accuse God of being indifferent to the suffering that is in the world. Unbelievers will listen to believers because of *what they do* more than because of *what they do not do* (i.e. merely avoiding scandalous sin).
- ¹⁶***That they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (Mt. 5:16)***
4. ***Glorify God:*** God is glorified by our good works because they testify that His power can transform our lives *from* our natural desire to live selfishly *to* embracing sacrificial love. It is a "miracle" to see people care for those from whom they receive nothing.
- D. Jesus promised that He will remember even our smallest acts of kindness (Mt. 10:42).
- ⁴²***And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward."*** (Mt. 10:42)