



Light of Messiah Ministries

...Bringing Jesus to the Jewish People

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Doing Good for Others

It's good to do good things for others. The holiday season brings out the best in us. Most people look forward to gathering around the Thanksgiving table with family and eating good food (with the understanding that family gatherings all have their own level of stress). Many will give to the needy and maybe send a turkey to a hungry homeless mom and her children. And after Thanksgiving the tree goes up, the house gets decorated, and we start thinking about Christmas. **It's a time to give to each other, and to those outside of the nuclear and extended family.**

Peace on earth and goodwill towards men. We all want it, and pray for it. So during this season we tend to ponder the good, and dwell on giving. **It's human nature to want to make others feel good. Because, when we make others feel good, we feel good too!** And everyone wants to feel good. It really is good to do good things for others.

However, there is another side to giving that most of us don't want to think about because it doesn't always feel good. It's giving the truth.

I am oftentimes asked what I do for a living. I tell people, "I talk to others about Jesus." "No," is the reply. "What do you DO?" "Well, I talk to other people about Jesus." "I don't get it," they say. You see, for many today, "just telling others about Jesus" isn't enough. **Our telling has become intertwined with doing good things. If we are not doing something good along with the telling, then the message is somehow deficient.** And many do good things, without telling others why. **Therein lies the problem.**



Carrying the cross was never meant to be easy.

I have been involved in sharing Jesus with my Jewish people for nearly 30 years. It is hard, difficult, work. **My people are not always receptive to the Good News. It is not good news to some, if not most of them.** It is news that has caused, from their viewpoint, hatred and pain. It reflects persecution. From a Jewish person's perspective Jesus is not a reason for hope, but the cause of two thousand years of hatred, death, and war. **The Prince of Peace has been blurred by the bad, even evil, that has been done in His name.** What we view as good is seen by many as negative, even wrong. I have to fight through the misunderstanding, looking for the one who is open.

But my people are not unlike some of your family and friends who perceive the Good News as connected with hypocrisy and legalism in the church. They are not Jewish, and yet still just as hostile to the message of Jesus because they have been hurt by those claiming the name "Christian".

Because of this reality it is easy to fall into the trap of doing good things for others to try to overcome the bad they perceive. We want to help them

"see" Jesus through our good works. **If they misunderstand what a Christian is, then isn't it our job to show them through what we do?** There certainly is some biblical foundation for doing so. We are told by Jesus to love our enemies and do good to those who hurt us. We are to lay our lives down, give to the needy, feed the hungry, help the suffering, and clothe the naked. The world is supposed to see Jesus through us. **But how can one see Jesus through us if we do not tell them about Him?**

Not too many years ago I was talking to a lady very excited about our ministry. She expressed her deep appreciation for what we do and our efforts to reach Jewish people with the message of Messiah. During our conversation she told me about a friend, a Jewish friend, she had had since high school. Their friendship was a long one, lasting over 30 years. "I have loved her with the love of Jesus," she said to me. I asked her a very simple question. "Have you ever told her of her need for Jesus?" "Have you ever shared the gospel with her?" "Oh no," she said. "I would never want to offend her." In our effort not to offend others many of us never share the Good News of Jesus. What a shame.

The "social gospel" is growing again in the church today and it is dangerous for us all. Doing good for others and loving people is not enough. It's not enough to just build a house, feed the hungry, or clothe the naked. We can literally love people to death. Of course our inaction to talk to others about Jesus could never keep a person out of heaven. God is the author of salvation. We are not bigger, or greater, than the power of the Holy Spirit. However we are commanded to proclaim the Good News to all who might hear.

Mission trips that do not include the sharing of the gospel are no different than the good will efforts by any non-Christian organization. Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, and Atheists do good things for others. It is not the action that is important, it is the message that accompanies the action. **If we do good for others and neglect to tell the recipient about the reason for our good works then we are no different than anyone else.** What sets us apart is the person of Jesus and the message of the Gospel. Our message must be connected with our doing good, even if it hurts, or alienates.

Messiah was born to die. **It is important to reflect on His death as we celebrate His birth because the purpose of His birth was to show us our need.** The mere fact that God became a Man is a gruesome reality and reflects the horror of our condition. The cross is not a symbol of beauty, it is a symbol of death, and illustrates our separation from God. **The Good News is that He died for us. The reality is that His birth, life, and death, were painful.**

The gospel itself is an offense. **We have to step out in faith and make an effort, even if sharing the truth is going to cause pain and possibly affect a relationship.** Jesus did not say that our efforts would be received with positive results all the time. In fact, He said just the opposite. **He warned us that friends and family would possibly not understand.** He told us that as we tell others about Him there would be division, persecution, and even pain. We might be hated. The message is not an easy one.

I am not suggesting that we cross boundaries that have been established by others. **If a person is not interested in the message of Jesus then we must respect that.** If a boundary, a line in the sand, has been drawn, after we attempt to discuss spiritual issues with another person, the line should not be crossed. However, most do not attempt the former (sharing the gospel) so that the latter (the line or boundary) can be established. Most do not discuss spiritual issues with others because of fear of the consequences, fear of offending, and honestly, it just doesn't feel good. **Rejection is al-**



ways painful, but the alternative is the pain that comes from knowing one never tried.

Our ministry encourages others to communicate the truth of Jesus in sensitive ways. We encourage others to build bridges of understanding in culturally relevant ways. Our gift basket ministry is a prime example of the opportunities we make possible for believers to bless their Jewish friends in ways that are not offensive.

By writing this letter I have stepped out in faith. I am risking alienating some of you for the sake of saying what I know to be truthful. I will take the chance. As a ministry we will take the chance because the message of Jesus is too important not to.

My prayer for you this season is that you would be bold in your witness and gentle in your approach. As you think about the birth of the Prince of Peace, remember to put the message in front of the action. Look for opportunities to share good things, and the Good News, with anyone you might run into. Divine appointments are right there if your eyes are open. **Do not gravitate to that which feels good, but gravitate towards that which is right despite your feelings. God will bless your efforts.**

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THANK YOU!

Please pray for our ministry as we close out the year. Pray that the Lord will give us continued boldness. **We have to take Jesus back to the special people whom He loved so much. We need to pray. We need to proclaim! The time is short.**

Thank you for sending us out with the message of peace and salvation in Jesus. Our expenses are a bit over our income for the year. A special year end gift will help us greatly. Thank you for praying for us. Thank you for standing with us financially. May the Lord richly bless you!

Celebrating Messiah's birth with you!

Murray Tilles...for the staff
 Light of Messiah Ministries

A NOTE ON YEAR END GIVING

Light of Messiah Ministries is recognized as a 501(c)(3) organization. We are members of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability. All gifts are tax deductible. All gifts received by December 31, 2011 will be receipted by January 31, 2012. You may also donate online at lightofmessiah.org

We are also able to accept donations of appreciated stock, one of the best ways to maximize your giving. Please contact our office and your financial advisor for information on how to give to Jewish ministry in creative ways.