

the Servant

newsletter

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Love suffers long and is kind. The life of Jesus demonstrated both. God is patient and if anyone ever suffered long it was Jesus on the cross. No one was kinder than he. He is still what the world needs and He died for all. Only faith and trust in Him can save, and the saved sinner, as Peter wrote, is a partaker of the divine nature, and that nature is patient and is kind. What kind of Christian am I, someone asked, fishing for a denomination. I said, I hope I am the "kind" kind.

God is love
as high as heaven
is up above
and the earth is solid beneath our feet
God is love,
I must repeat.
This love of God is sound,
before, behind and all around
and as strong as is omnipotence
and at the same time, oh so sweet.
God is love
and everywhere
as omnipresence is,
Love is indeed God's
open hand and love
the hand that gives.
Love is strong
and pure and kind
and blessed are those
who God's love find
and in it find the key
to unlock this
celestial mystery
that without it we are
nothing
but in God's love
we're free. -id

Book of Acts

"He went about doing good." Such is the description of Jesus Christ in the Book of Acts. Every life is a book of acts. The Book of Revelation says that on Judgment Day the "books" will be opened. It may be our own Book of Acts that shall be read word for word. No one is interested in your book entitled "Things I never did." Judgment day is not about our good intentions, or great or crazy ideas, but what we did, our acts. One thing can sum up the life of Christ. *He went about doing good (Acts 10:38)*. He is the example, He is the sample. He is the standard and the benchmark for mankind. In His humanity He was made a little lower than the angels that we might become children of God. You would be hard pressed to come up with a greater testimony than that of *"He went about doing good."* And I would add, blessed are the pure in heart who see God in this goodness. Those who don't see God in goodness are blinded by an impurity of heart. All who follow in His steps also follow in this train, *"Surely, goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life..."* A snail leaves a trail of slime everywhere it goes. Likewise, the godless, dregs of humanity leave a telltale track. Outside of Christ, there is none that doeth good, no not one. Good is the gold standard of godliness. The Christian's creed is simple: In Christ, be good, do good, for good.

The rich young ruler asked, *"Good Master, what must I do to inherit eternal life."* Most sermons miss the mark in this text and fall short of the glory of God. Grace is a gift. You don't have to do, you have to be, and in order to be, you have to believe. Having said that, this is a lesson about goodness. When Moses wanted to see God's glory, God said *"I will cause my goodness to pass before thee."* This goodness was now passing by this Rich Young Ruler, with Christ. He asked about eternal life. It is a gift. The truth of *"by grace through faith"* was way over the Rich Young Ruler's head, so Jesus aimed a littler lower than the head. He aims for the heart. This proud man talked about how good he was. *"All these [commandments] have I kept from my youth up."* He was (he thought), a good boy. Okay, [good boy] give all you have to the poor, come and follow me. It turns out he was not that good after all. He went away sorrowing. Jesus was however that good. The Bible says, *"He who was rich, for our sakes became poor..."* Be good, do good, for good. We cannot do any of this outside of Christ and the new birth. He gives us "both the will and the 'to do' of God's good pleasure." At the end of faith and the "to do," which is found in the "follow me" part of the Christian life, we all long to hear, *"well done, thou good and faithful servant"*. So what is good anyway, and what is evil? That was the issue in the Garden before the fall. God made light and called it good. God made the heaven and the earth and it was good also. God then made man and said it was very good. Good is what God intended something to be. Evil is the deliberate misuse of what God intended. Therefore we can pray, Lord, help me by grace through faith [in Christ] to be good, to do good, for good. *"Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven"*. -id

Do Good

If you were Dutch in '42
would you protect or hide a Jew?
Would you have risked your life and limb
to stand between the Reich and him?
If before the civil war
a weary slave stood at your door
would you ignore the barking hounds
and help the railroad underground?
If you were on your way to pray
and in the road a poor man lay
would you like Levite or like priest
walk over him and do the least
or stop to help like the Samaritan,
saying "I'll do my best, and all I can"?
The slave in chains you helped set free,
the hungry man you fed,
"when you helped them, you then helped
me,"
is what our Savior said.

Salvation is not by our works of righteousness which we have done, but by God's mercy He has saved us. Having said that, the weights of judgment are in what we do for others. "We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus, unto good works" (Eph.2:10). Having heard me preach a funeral and deliver a Eulogy for a dear friend, someone said they would like me to deliver their eulogy. I said, "You have to give me something to work with." Some people live only for themselves and theirs, they never did anything for others and to be honest, there is not much to say as we stand next to their coffin. Except for "me, myself, and mine," they never lived. They hid whatever talent they had, or potential they had been given by God in a napkin. From what the Gospel says, that won't play well on Judgment day. (Matthew 25:18)

Things To Do

I had so many things to do
first one thing, then another
a broken china cup to glue,
(a promise to my mother).
The garden gate I must repair
and then there are those weeds to pull
the tractor's tire is looking bare
"uhm," I think the kitty litter's full

I have a poor friend who is sick
I do hope he gets better
I'm trying hard a card to pick
to send by post and letter
no sooner do I fix the roof
there's a problem with the plumbing
the IRS is demanding proof
then there are those, my in-laws coming

I dreamed I awoke in a perfect world
with everything in order
asleep at my feet, the cat was curled
"now" no dog's bowl needs water
the sun was bright and shining
no bumps, no lumps, no bruises
there were no children whining
All win there, and no one loses

So by and by there was no need
no little hungry mouths to feed
no friend to visit in his sorrow
none at my door, who ask to borrow

Not much to do, I am afraid
all ducks are lined up in a row
no one needs our help or aid
or that we pay back what we owe

I'll take this needy, imperfect earth
with drought or stormy weather
for all these things, gives each life worth
not the beds of downy feather -id

"Why stand ye here all day idle?" Mt.20:6
"Why stand ye gazing up into heaven..." Acts 1:1 When Satan tried to get our Savior to bow down and "worship" him, Christ said "it is written, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and only Him shalt thou serve." Jesus did not try to separate worship from work. James was right. Faith without works is dead. Or as I like to say, "faith without works doesn't work." To be sure, true faith knows that it is "God that worketh in you both to will and do His good pleasure," but real faith has feet. When the four friends lowered their sick charge through the hole they had made in the roof, the Bible says, Jesus "saw their faith." Real faith can no more be hidden than a city on a hill or a candle on a lampstand. While faith is spiritual, it is also something that can be seen. *By their fruits, ye shall know them.* The writer of Hebrews said, "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Some of us could use a little more substance and evidence. If there is one thing worse than Idol worship, it's idle worship.

The Bible teaches salvation is an act or work of God. Jesus said, "I must work the works of Him that sent me..." When it comes to the Bible, "working the works" is called application. The life of faith is something that works. It does not work for salvation, but because of salvation. Once Saul realized that Jesus was alive along the Damascus Road after asking "who art thou Lord," (that's the first great question) he asked the second most important question "what do you want me to do?" As a new year approaches, many will consider New Year's resolutions. What kind of year might it be if every saint were a servant? What kind of world would it be if our life was not one long "Selfie"? What if we put Jesus first, others second and our self last? Perhaps, then we would finally "get it." JOY to the world the Lord is truly come!

We should do this every year and
perhaps start a great tradition



and by the way, we loved your wife's
green bean casserole



id

