

THE EXTERNALLY FOCUSED CHURCH: Good News and Good Deeds Acts 10.36-38

King Josiah had a couple of biographers. The writers of 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles record that he became king at the age of eight, began seeking the Lord at sixteen, rediscovered the Scriptures, and brought about spiritual and moral reforms in Judah. But the one thing that went forward from his life was the epitaph written by his contemporary, Jeremiah.

Jeremiah composed laments for Josiah, and to this day all the men and women singers commemorate Josiah in the laments. 2 Chronicles 35.25a

*'He did what was **right** and **just**, so all went well with him. He defended the cause of the poor and needy, and so all went well. **Is that not what it means to know me?**' declares the Lord. Jeremiah 22.15b-16*

*You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, **telling the good news** of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. You know what has happened throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached – how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how **he went around doing good** and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him. Acts 10.36-38*

Good Deeds Genuinely Benefit Others

If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth. 1 John 3.17-18

Good Deeds Glorify God

Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven. Matthew 5.16.

Good Deeds Validate the Good News

When Jesus saw their faith, he said, 'Friend, your sins are forgiven.'

The Pharisees and the teachers of the law began thinking to themselves, 'Who is this fellow who speaks blasphemy? Who can forgive sins but God alone?'

Jesus knew what they were thinking and asked, "Why are you thinking these things in your hearts? Which is easier: to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk?' But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins. . . ." He said to the paralyzed man, "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home." Immediately he stood up in front of them, took what he had been lying on and went home praising God. Everyone was amazed and gave praise to God. They were filled with awe and said, "We have seen remarkable things today." Luke 5.20-16

What Good Deeds Do Not Accomplish

Good works can be the bridge or the road, but they are not the saving message that crosses that bridge or travels that road. Good works are the complement but never the substitute for good news.

I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes. Romans 1.16

Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ. Romans 10.17

How can we tell others the good news? We suggest you think in terms of stories.

First, listen to the other person's story.

Second, ask permission to tell your story.

Third, ask permission to tell God's story: the plan of salvation.