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MESSAGE NOTES

Faith for the Fringes...Love for the Least
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Jesus is preparing us to give away our lives.

Matthew 5:40, The Message – Jesus said.

If someone drags you into court and sues you for the shirt off your back, gift wrap your best coat and make a present of it.

Ten Most Popular Excuses Why We Don't Help

1. "It's too dangerous for me to stop and help."
2. "I've got to get to work, I'm already late."
3. "Why isn't the government taking care of this?"
4. "Someone really should help that guy."
5. "I can't get my clothes bloody."
6. "I don't know first aid."
7. "It looks hopeless."
8. "I'm only one person; the job's too big."
9. "He brought it on himself. What goes around comes around."
10. "He might be a decoy for an ambush."

Romans 5:10

...when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to Him through the death of His Son

Matthew 25:34, NKJV

Jesus said, "Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world...'"

Our motive for doing good must be firmly established long before we say or do anything.

Acts 10:38, NKJV

God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about **doing good** [Gr. bestowing benefits on others; being philanthropic] and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.

Until we can demonstrate undeniable good, we are not yet living an irrefutable life.

Jesus allowed His disciples to pick grain on the Sabbath (Matthew 12:1-2, Mark 2:23-28). The religious leaders in Christ's day were upset because they believed He was breaking their religious laws. Jesus responded...

Matthew 12:7a

I desire mercy and not sacrifice

The word "mercy" here means "kindness or good will towards the miserable and the afflicted, joined with a desire to help them."

Matthew 12:14, Mark 3:6, NKJV

Then the Pharisees went out and plotted against Him, how they might destroy Him.

You don't realize how deceived you are until you find yourself fighting against God.

Ephesians 3:16-19, NLT

I pray that from His glorious, unlimited resources He will empower you with inner strength through His Spirit. Then Christ will make His home in your hearts as you trust in Him. Your roots will grow down into God's love [Gr. brotherly love, affection, good will, benevolence] and keep you strong.

And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep His love is.

May you experience the love [Gr. brotherly love, affection, good will, benevolence] of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God.

The seeming unequal provision between God's children tests the trust in our hearts, not the inequality in His.

Matthew 25:37-40, NKJV – Jesus said,

“Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?’ And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the LEAST of these My brethren, you did it to Me.’”

God delights to use the least of us, as well as the least in us. Often the smallest dimensions in our lives, when attached to our weakness and dependency, are the very dimensions God is most able to use.

Matthew 13:31b-32, NKJV – Jesus said,

“The kingdom of Heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field, which indeed is the least of all the seeds; but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches.”

Philippians 2:3

Let nothing be done through selfish ambition [Gr. a desire to put one's self forward] or conceit [Gr. self esteem, empty pride, self-conceit] but in lowliness of mind [Gr. having a humble opinion of one's self, a deep sense of one's moral littleness] let each esteem others better [Gr. far greater in value] than himself.