

“Love Lifted Me Recovery” - October, 2016

Newsletter for July, August, September, 2016

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LoveLiftedMeRecovery.com

We believe that salvation is by FAITH ALONE, so where do our works come into it? Are we justified by faith or by works? Some Scriptures, such as Romans 4 and James 2, SEEM to be contradictory, because they both use the terms “justified by works” - in James it says we ARE justified by our works, and in Romans it says we are NOT justified by our works. This is not a contradiction, however, because if you look at each one in its context, you will see that Romans is speaking about being justified before God, and James is speaking about being justified before men.

1.) JUSTIFIED BEFORE GOD – **Justified** before God means that God by His GRACE **declares RIGHTEOUS** the sinner who believes on Jesus Christ. It is **NOT a process of becoming** righteous, **it is a ONE-TIME ACT of GRACE** — we, as sinful people, are MADE RIGHTEOUS the moment we accept Jesus as our Savior!

2.) JUSTIFIED BEFORE MEN – There is another kind of justification, the kind spoken of in James, and that is referring to **our witness or testimony before MEN** rather than before God. Our works become a testimony to others, because **REAL faith** will have good works **as a RESULT** of salvation. Someone has said, “Salvation is by faith alone, but faith that saves is not alone.” Romans 4:2 says, “if Abraham was **justified by WORKS**, he has something of which to boast, **but NOT before God.**” Justify in this sense means **“to prove or show to be just, right or righteous.”** Abraham was “justified” in that his actions SHOWED or PROVED that he was a righteous man and a believer in God. There is a popular saying that goes, “If you were arrested for being a Christian, would there be enough **evidence** to convict you?” Do people know there is something different about you now that you are a Christian, or do you act just the same as you always did? St. Francis of Assisi said, “Preach the gospel always, and when necessary, use words.” We are talking about the kind of witness we have before non-believers. Do they **see Christ in us**, or at least see us on our way and in the process of being changed and transformed? Philippians 2:12-13 says our salvation must be “WORKED OUT” so that it can be seen on the outside. Jesus said in Matthew 5:16 that **our good WORKS would be SEEN by men**, and because of them, it would cause men to glorify God. In John 15:8, Jesus said the Father would be glorified by our producing MUCH FRUIT, which is another way to refer to our good works.

•**James 2:14-26** “What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can [*that*] faith save him? If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, ‘Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,’ but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. But someone will say, ‘You have faith, and I have works. Show me your faith without your works, and **I will show you my faith by my works.**”

•**Matthew 5:16** “Let your light so shine before MEN, that **they may SEE your GOOD WORKS** and glorify your Father in heaven.”

Monthly Evangelistic Outreach to Venice Beach

Saturday, July 2, 2016 - Today was the day for our beach outreach, and as usual, we never know who will show up to go out with us until Saturday morning. We just have to leave it in the Lord’s hands, and He brings whomever He wants to be there. This time, we had the added knowledge that the BT guys couldn’t come (they and their vehicle were needed for other work projects at the Bible Tabernacle), and Shami couldn’t come (they were going on their annual missionary trip to the Fiji Islands), so we prayed that the Lord would provide enough people from elsewhere. I was reminded of First Samuel

14:6, "For nothing restrains the Lord from saving by many or by few." So, even if only a few people showed up, we could still do whatever the Lord wanted us to do. Those He brought for this outreach, besides Tom and me, were Keith, Johnny, and Tony, who have all come before, and three new people: Stacy Worthy (who used to be in our prison program), and Cynthia and Roslyn. We had 170 lunches, lots of socks and toiletries, quite a lot of used clothing, and a pair of size 13 shoes, almost new. Stacy, Roslyn and Cynthia came with me to the north end of the Boardwalk and parking lot, and we found a large enclave of homeless people up at the north end. Right away, Stacy found a guy who had size 13 feet, and he was very grateful to get the shoes. Tony, Keith and Johnny took the route usually handled by the Bible Tabernacle guys, and Shami and her group, because none of them were here today. Tony also brought some apples, oranges, and individually-wrapped pastries and muffins that were donated by Smart & Final, and everyone was very happy to get those along with a lunch. The oranges were an especially great hit, as people would see them and say, "Oh! Can I have an orange, please?" Tony talked with some homeless young men (about 19 years old or so, he said), and reminded them to keep talking to God, and they said they do. Stacy spoke with a man named Jeffrey, and he was very intelligent, and a poet, and yet he was homeless. Cynthia and Roslyn spoke with a lady named Hunterly, and she was living out of her car, and said she had just fallen on hard times. They gave her information on the Bible Tabernacle, as well as food and other items. I met a young man named Brian, but he seemed to have some mental problems. He did say he was a Christian, and asked for prayer that people would treat him kindly and with respect, and that God would help him financially. I prayed with him right there, and gave him food, toiletries and other things for his immediate needs. It took us all a little longer to pass out all the stuff, because of having fewer people in our ministry group, and Stacy, Roslyn, Cynthia and I had just a few lunches left, so we went up to the north end of the parking lot again.

We found some people that we had missed on our first trip up there. We had one lunch left, and I gave it to a young man named Tristan. He said his wife Maren needed some things, too, so we gave him the last of our muffins and apples, and two toiletry packets. We also gave him information about the Bible Tabernacle, if they were interested in getting off the streets. He seemed to be interested in checking it out. He said he was a Christian, and we noticed quite a few people that we ministered to also said they were Christians, or at least thanked God in some way. It reminded me of the Scripture in II Corinthians 9:12-13. Last, but not least, we continued to hand out gospel tracts to anyone and everyone once we finished giving out all the stuff to the homeless. Each lunch that we give to the homeless contains a gospel tract, also.

II Corinthians 9:12-13 "For the administration of this service not only SUPPLIES the NEEDS of the SAINTS, but also is abounding through many THANKSGIVINGS to GOD, while, through the proof of this ministry, they glorify God for the obedience of your confession to the gospel of Christ, and for your liberal sharing with them and all men."

Saturday, August 6, 2016 - The Lord of the Harvest brought us these people as laborers to go forth into His harvest today: Tom, Dottie, Tony, Bob, Nancy, Monica, Mitch, Frank, Justin and Ararat. We had a total of 177 lunches, lots of socks and toiletries, and some clothing to give to the homeless. Tony also brought several bags of tangerines that had been donated. We had gospel tracts to give to anyone and everyone who would take one, and as always, we pray that the Lord will bring us together with the people He wants us to meet in "divine encounters." We all thought it went very well, and most people were open to taking a tract. The homeless people were very grateful to receive the food and other items, also. Monica was surprised at how fast everything was given away, as we happened upon large groups of homeless that nearly wiped us out of stuff right away. Nancy gave a lunch and things to Dawn, who was in a wheelchair, and said she had received her injuries in Iraq, and that now she had cancer. She asked for prayer, and Nancy prayed with her. Nancy and Monica also prayed with a man named Brian, and I had prayed with him last month. I thought he just had mental problems, but Bob

said he might be high on drugs - it's hard to tell sometimes. We all gave out information for the Bible Tabernacle for anyone who is really interested in getting off the streets. Bob said one young man was out here from Oklahoma, and he said he would be there for church tonight. We also met a young couple who said they were out here from Florida, and had only been here a few days. They were interested in the Bible Tabernacle, too.

Saturday, September 3, 2016 - Today, for our beach outreach, we had Tom and me, and the Lord always surprises us with whoever else shows up. Some of our "regulars" were not able to come, but we had some new people. The team we had this time was: Frank, Justin, John, Toby, Manuel, A.J., Bob, Jackie, Keith, Tony and Chris. We were so glad to meet John, because he is a man who was invited to come to the Bible Tabernacle a few months ago (he was homeless down at the beach, and our group gave him information on the BT), and has been living there and doing well this whole time, and was even the driver for the van from Canyon Country this time. We had 170 lunches, lots of socks and toiletry/hygiene packets, and some used clothing to give out to the homeless population of Venice Beach, and every single item was received gratefully. Every lunch has a gospel tract in it, but we also handed out several hundred gospel tracts (in English and in Spanish) to the people who were just going up and down the Boardwalk on a Saturday morning. One family took several tracts, and I saw the little girl still reading hers as we passed them going the other way. I love getting the gospel into the hands of children! Of the new people who came with us, Jackie said she loved it, and was surprised to see so many young people who were homeless and camping out on the beach. The police were there making some of the homeless encampments leave, as it is technically against the law to camp out on the beach. Keith went up to a policeman and asked him before he gave out lunches to one group, and the officer said it was okay, and he was glad we were helping people. I guess it is just their job, and they have to do it. Bob, Tony and Manuel took the route usually taken by Shami and whoever goes with her, and they said there were not as many people as usual. Frank said he saw a man eating some watermelon, and when he gave him a lunch, which contains more substantial food, the man was very happy. I saw a man collecting cans and bottles from the trash cans, and that doesn't necessarily mean he was homeless, but I asked him how he was doing, and if he needed any food. His face just brightened up, and he said, "Yes, I do need food." He spoke with an accent, so I asked if he would like some tracts in Spanish, and he said "Yes" to that, also. All in all, we gave out in the name of Jesus every lunch and most of the toiletries and socks, and planted seeds of the gospel in many people's lives. To God be the glory!

Prison Ministry

Justin Hong, Pelican Bay State Prison, Crescent City, CA - "Thank you for another lesson and your updates. I imagine that you must have hundreds of papers to go through and correct, so I really appreciate that you read my answers and for your encouraging feedback. I very much enjoy reading about your outreach and the work you do for our Lord. I wish I could be of some service to your ministry and help on the outreach. As for your Bible studies, your lessons require me to search the Scriptures and dwell in His word, which has only brought me closer to our God. I look forward to the next lesson and I will pray for your ministry. In Christ alone, Justin Hong"

Bennie T. Arrington, Soledad State Prison, Soledad, CA - "I have received my Twelve Step Recovery Program certificate, and was elated to be able to complete this area of the program. Thank you so much for all your love and support during this journey. I would really like to continue my Bible study lessons with you if you have another study available. Your course puts everything in the Bible into words that are much easier to understand. Although I have accepted Jesus Christ as my personal Savior many years ago, and trust only in Him, your Bible study course has taught me so many things

about our Father that I did not know, and I want to continue on. Yours in Christ, Bennie”

Jose Luis Guzman, Salinas Valley State Prison, Soledad, CA - “From the beginning of this course it was the start of a new me, and the first time I decided to change myself in the most positive ways I could. I had come to the point where I was getting nowhere, always quick to talk out of turn, always quick to fight, believing that doing so was gonna be a success in the gangs. I wrote to your program and doing the lessons started me thinking about my anger, the hate, the doubt that crossed my mind, and it all started to evaporate. Your program has led me to understand that negativity and doing things on my own terms gets me nowhere - nothing works. This program is giving me enlightenment. Recognizing the problems is a start. Progress is not perfection. Thank you. Sincerely, Jose Luis Guzman”

Yen Chiu, California Men’s Colony, San Luis Obispo, CA - “Thank you for my certificate, and your love and support, bringing me closer to Christ, and so many more experiences as result from our interaction. I genuinely believe a new person inside of me evolved. I am truly committed to do more in life in service of God. I will continue to keep my correspondence with you. I think you guys are stuck with me. Step 4 and 5 really made a big difference for me. I needed to get rid of all that pain and shame the I held inside for such a long time. Thank you once again. I hope to see you, and hopefully by this time next year, I will be able to volunteer in your outreach. God bless you, Yen M. Chiu”

Tony Saffold, Folsom State Prison, Represa, CA - “I don’t know if anyone ever writes and tells you all this, but we really do appreciate all that you do for us. Many of us may feel that the world out there has forgotten all about us, and some don’t have anybody out there. The only letters they may receive are the letters from you. I enjoy your Bible studies. They keep me focused and well rounded, and the verse that I’m looking for may be the words I needed to motivate me for that day or week. Once again, thanks for everything, and pray for us. Sincerely, Tony Saffold”

Robert Richie, San Quentin State Prison, San Quentin, CA - “I just wanted to take a moment to say thank you! And to remind you that “Your labor is not in vain in the Lord.” His word is accomplishing what He sent it to do. I love the way your Step lessons cause us to seek the Scriptures and apply them to our addictions and sin in general. It’s awesome! I’ve worked the N.A. 12 steps, and my Higher Power is, of course, the One and only true God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. If and when I ever get out of here and go home to the Bay Area, I’ll find a Jesus-based 12-Step program. If there isn’t one in my area, I pray that God will use me to start one. If that happens, I will contact you for advice and materials. Your Brother in Christ, Robert”

Tina M. Bura, Central California Women’s Facility, Chowchilla, CA - “I want to thank you for taking the time to send me my lessons. I also enjoy reading your letters. I do have a couple of prayer requests.... could you please pray for my son Michael to be freed from his heroin addiction? Michael is 25, and has had a hard life. He was taken from me when he was five years old and adopted, because of my drug addiction. The next time I saw him he was twenty. To find his mother after fifteen years, and she’s in prison with a life sentence for second degree murder was traumatizing for him, I’m sure. He needs help, and prayer is the only thing I can do for him now. Thank you for your prayers. God is so awesome, and I want to live my life only for him. Sincerely, Tina Bura”

Ramiro Fonseca, California Men’s Colony, San Luis Obispo, CA - “I thank God with all my heart for all your help you have been giving me for almost ten years now. I have been blessed by god with your kindness, love and respect. I am honored to call you my brother and sister in Jesus Christ our Lord. I will be your friend forever. It does not matter if I get out and have to go to Mexico or stay here, you have won a little place in my heart forever. In agape love, R. Fonseca”