

Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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Care Truly

(Jerry Fite)

Here is a quarter. Call someone who cares. This sentiment has been around for a while, because current payphones require a couple of quarters for a call. Today, one could even be more charitable by offering one's cell phone for the free call. But the motive behind the sentiment is not exactly a magnanimous one. As conveyed in a popular country song, the motive is to be sarcastic and unforgiving. You can say you are sorry, but I will not forgive. Call someone who cares. I don't!

Paul identifies one who truly cares. His name is Timothy. Hoping to send Timothy to the Philippians, Paul writes, *“For I have no man likeminded who will care truly for your state. For they seek their own, not the things of Jesus Christ”* (Philippians 2:20-21).

Timothy was not like some who might say they care, but “seek their own,” instead. They do not “truly” care because they put their own concerns above the needs of others. Previously, in the letter to the Philippians, Paul emphasized the humility behind truly caring for others: *“...but in lowliness of mind each counting other*

better than himself; not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others” (Philippians 2:3-4). Caring truly about another is manifested when the other person's needs take precedence over our present circumstances, plans and time. We are aware of “our own concerns,” but put them “on hold,” for the good of “others” when we truly care.

Genuine care for the state of others may be hard to find, but not impossible. Paul had Timothy who was “likeminded” with him in truly caring for the state of the Philippians. All Christians should set “unfeigned love” for brethren as a goal when they rise from the waters of baptism. Peter exhorts believers, *“Seeing ye have purified your souls in your obedience to the truth unto unfeigned love of the brethren, love one another from the heart fervently...”* (1 Peter 1:22). Fervent love of the Christian is not only to be “earnest” or “fully stretched out,” but it is to be “true” and “genuine.”

Paul equates the “state” or “welfare” of people with “the things of Jesus Christ.” The things of Jesus Christ certainly include the physical needs of others. The parable of the sheep and goats

clearly drives home this point. The “sheep” are those who see their brothers, even the very least among them, “hungry,” “thirsty,” “a stranger,” “naked,” “sick” and “in prison” and respond with the appropriate remedy. Jesus says when they did it unto these brethren in need, they *“did it unto me”* (Matthew 25:40).

Truly caring for the welfare of others must include their spiritual wellbeing. The “eternal” state must take precedence over the physical needs in this world. Knowing that after this life is over, all will either enjoy everlasting life in Heaven, or will suffer eternal punishment in Hell, we cannot ignore the “*spiritual state*” of others. What good is it to take in a brother as “a stranger”, but fail to ignore the sin we learn he is committing? We should seek to convert him from his sin, for in doing so we are *“saving a soul from death”* (James 5:20).

Can you truly care for another's welfare in “the things of Christ,” and do nothing to restore the person who has fallen away from Christ (Galatians 6:1-5)? Let us be likeminded with Paul! May we all care truly for one another!