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## A FRIENDLY DOSE OF HOSPITALITY

*“What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, and one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace, be warmed and be filled,’ and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that? Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself,” (James 2:14-17).*

Several years ago I was about to head out on a very long road trip, and decided to make a pit stop at the Reeder house and visit Randy and Missy. When I got there, I not only was warmly welcomed by Randy and Missy, but by Missy’s parents, Ivan and Nancy Shockey, who were also visiting with the Reeder household. It was an unexpected visit, and when I let them know of the long journey I was headed on, naturally Ivan

began to take a great deal of interest in the condition of my car (I had a frequent history of used automobiles breaking down on me on the side of the road that they were well aware of). Ivan came out and gave my car a careful look, and said, “Before you take off, you got time to make a stop with me to Autozone? I don’t like the look of those wiper blades. I think you could use a new pair.” So Ivan and I went to Autozone where he paid to have my vehicle outfitted with a brand new set of wiper blades. I think we often associate the concept of hospitality with making a delicious meal, providing a comfortable place to stay and pleasant company towards a guest in our home. All of those things certainly do fit the description of being hospitable to our guests, but we need to be aware that true hospitality is

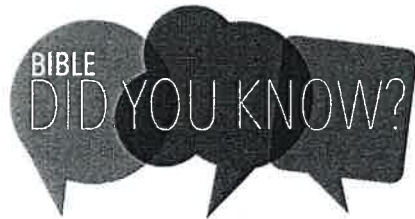
derived by a genuine awareness of the real needs of others and the desire to specifically meet those needs in the best way we are able. This is what James is referring to, and reminds us of the faith of Rahab as an example of this. *"You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone. In the same way, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way? For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead,"* (James 2:24-26). James uses the account of Rahab to not only illustrate her faith in God, but to demonstrate the specific way her faith was exhibited in hospitality...in a very specific manner. Rahab could have very easily whipped up an incredible meal topped off by a dessert to knock their sandals off, been the most gracious and polite conversationalist and make sure they had clean sheets to sleep in and send them on their way saying, "Well it sure has been nice to have you visit for a while! I sure do hope the King doesn't find you spying the land out. Good luck!" But that's not what she did. If she did, then Rahab's name would have appeared in James 2:14-17 when he spoke of useless faith

that doesn't save. *"...one of you says to them, 'Go in peace, be warmed and be filled,' and yet you do not give them what is necessary..."* (James 2:16). While good food, clean sheets and polite conversation are hospitable things to provide, these are not what the spies needed. What they needed was protection from the King who was searching for them to capture and kill them. So Rahab's hospitality was not only a place to stay while they were visiting Jericho, but protection from their enemies seeking their lives. *"And the king of Jericho sent word to Rahab, saying, 'Bring out the men who have come to you, who have entered your house, for they have come to search out all the land.' But the woman had taken the two men and hidden them, and she said, 'Yes, the men came to me, but I did not know where they were from. It came about when it was time to shut the gate at dark, that the men went out; I do not know where the men went. Pursue them quickly, for you will overtake them.' But she had brought them up to the roof and hidden them in the stalks of flax which she had laid in order on the roof. So the men pursued them on the road to the Jordan to the fords; and as soon as*

*those who were pursuing them had gone out, they shut the gate," (Josh. 2:3-7). Rahab not only supplied them with protection and safety from their pursuers, but she also gave them useful information that was extremely helpful for their work in spying the land out. "For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea...and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites...When we heard it, our hearts melted and no courage remained in any man any longer because of you, '...They said to Joshua, 'Surely the LORD has given all the land into our hands; moreover, all the inhabitants of the land have melted away before us,' " (Josh. 2:10,11,24).*

If someone is hungry, a meal is what's needed. If tired, a bed, and if lonely and discouraged, a comforting encouraging conversation is needed. Jesus emphasized how hospitality shown to the 12 Apostles as they went about teaching and preaching would be highly regarded, because in the midst of rejection and persecution, a hospitable home would provide much needed acceptance and safety. *"Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves...beware of men, for they will hand you over...and*

*scourge you in their synagogues...He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me. He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. And whoever in the name of a disciple gives to one of these little ones even a cup of cold water to drink, truly I say to you, he shall not lose his reward," (Matt. 10:16,17,40-42). – Daniel Ruegg*



***"The wicked flee when no one is pursuing, but the righteous are bold as a lion. By the transgression of a land many are its princes, but by a man of understanding and knowledge, so it endures."***  
**Prov. 28:1-2**



# MONTHLY CHALLENGE

**DIRECTIONS:** Each first Sunday of the month, we will have challenges that you should attempt to complete by the end of the month. If we all, as members, complete these challenges, our church will grow in spirit and in number.

## 1) Seeing Christ In The Old Testament Challenge

**Ephesians 3:4-5** *"By referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit."* While the Old testament was guiding the Jewish nation towards God's promised messiah, it was the New Testament that finally revealed how Jesus is our ultimate redeemer. In light of this, as we study and read the old testament, it is amazing how we can see shadows and glimpses of Him and His saving gospel hinted at and revealed in the pages of the old testament. Spend time this month reading books from the old testament, and see if you can find further pictures and references to Jesus there. See if you can trace themes and patterns in various books that help shed light on the saving power of Christ. "Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come." 1 Cor. 10:11

## 2) USING YOUR BIBLE IN THE WORLD

Share the following verses with someone who does not attend this congregation at least twice this month:

### *Isaiah 6:1-8*

"In the year of King Uzziah's death I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple. Seraphim stood above Him, each having six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called out to another and said, 'Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory.' And the foundations of the thresholds trembled at the voice of him who called out, while the temple was filling with smoke. Then I said, 'Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.' Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a burning coal in his hand, which he had taken from the altar with tongs. He touched my mouth with it and said, 'Behold, this has touched your lips; and your iniquity is taken away and your sin is forgiven.' Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, 'Whom shall I send, and whom will go for Us?' Then I said, 'Here am I. Send me!'"