

"Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth." Jeremiah 23:5

the OLIVE BRANCH

WINTER
2009-10

Bringing God Glory

From Glory to Glory Part 10

In our examination of the theme "from glory to glory" (2 Corinthians 3:18) we have considered various ways by which the Lord chooses to reveal His glory to us and through us – including trials and tests, and through miracles above and beyond what we could expect. We have even considered whether there is anything that we can do to enter into (to engage) these moments of His glorious downpours upon our lives! It is His good pleasure to shower His glorious blessings upon His children.

.....From the Overseer's Desk.....

A Higher Purpose

If we are not careful, however, we can easily find ourselves focusing only on *what He does for us* to reveal His glory. What a wasteful shame and disgrace that would be. Considering all He has done for us and continues to do, should we not also be seeking how we might glorify Him? How we might bring glory to His name?

As we consider this, the account of Christ healing the ten lepers, as found in Luke 17:11-19, comes to mind. There were ten lepers that "*lifted up their voices*" (v. 13) crying for His mercy and healing; and there were ten lepers that He healed that day (v. 14). But only one of them turned again to the Master and "*with a loud voice glorified God*" (v. 13). Moreover, that healed leper then turned and "*fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks*" (v. 16). Who was this one leper that returned to give thanks and praise – a Samaritan (v. 17), part of a despised race during that time.

Before we proceed any further into this sermon, perhaps each of us should take a moment to

examine oneself: Have you given God the praise and glory that He deserves from you? If you haven't, then now would be a good time to tell Him just what He means to you!

Bringing Him Glory

We will return to this thought of our glorifying Him *with our praises* for all He does for us. But, first, let us consider the question: Are there other ways by which we can glorify Him, that bring Him glory? Certainly, when He showers His glorious manifestations upon us, such as when He heals us or carries us through a trial, that also brings glory to Him as the one who provided the blessing, the power, the victory. Such manifestations are explicit and public – that is, other people recognize that which they are seeing as His glorious manifestations.

Through these manifestations, Christ is "*glorified in his saints.*" But could Paul have meant more when in 2 Thessalonians 1:10-12 he penned the words:

(10) When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe

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Bulletin board...



Above: Regional workers unite in prayer at the Western District Ministers Convention in Uniontown, PA. in October. Eastern District Ministers Convention photos are found on page 9.

2010 Calendar

East District Convention— March 27, New Rochelle, NY

West District Convention— April 10, Uniontown, PA

Ladies Retreat, April 30-May 2, Camp Sunrise, Markleysburg, PA

Youth Convention— May 15-16, Uniontown, PA

Bible Training Institute, May 30-June 13, General Headquarters, Charleston, TN

Youth Camp, June 10-14, Mt. Chestnut Nazarene Center, Butler, PA

Regional Convention, July 9-11, Uniontown, PA

General Assembly: Dates and times to be announced.

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New Look

The Olive Branch and its Spanish counterpart, *La Rula Oliva*, have a new look for the winter edition. This is because the region has changed to a new publishing software package which God provided at a steep discount. We can now translate from English, in which the newsletter is designed, to Spanish with less difficulty and time involved.

Contact us:

The Olive Branch is a publication of The Church of God—Northeast Region, serving churches in Delaware, Massachusetts, Maryland, New York and Pennsylvania, and new works throughout the greater area.

It can be viewed online in English and Spanish at our website: www.tcog-ne.org.

Reports and other **submissions for the SPRING 2010 issue need to be received by March 1.**

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WMB...Coordinator Diana Seese

"Hear, O Israel: the LORD our God is one LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart." Deut. 6:4-6

One of the first things which the Lord told his people was a simple command to "hear." That is still the first thing we all must do in order to have a victorious relationship with Him. Hearing God's words brings faith.

We are talking about more than simply reading the Bible. The kind of hearing God seeks is that which is done with the "ears of our heart." Anyone with normally functioning physical ears can hear, but to understand as God desires, we must love Him with all our heart, soul and strength. In turn, if we enjoy His presence (in His joy), we will experience His strength and help in our lives.

Truly hearing God's word is also necessary before we can obey Him. Hearing is receiving His doctrine into our hearts. In the above passage, we are told the commands that He gave are to be in our hearts.

If we have received the words of life from the Father, they will be spiritually engraved upon our hearts. There, they will prompt us to acknowledge Him in all our ways. And, He will seal us with His Holy Spirit and write our names in the Lamb's Book of Life.

Hearing and receiving God's words make life on earth "a wonderful life." Just knowing He is Lord and has redeemed us from the curse of sin and death is the good news of the Gospel.

Let His love letter from above be written on the tablets of your heart today. His words are "Wonderful Words of Life," as the old song says. His promise and covenant have been signed, sealed and delivered with the shedding of His precious blood on Calvary.

As the old hymn states: "When God dips His pen of love in our hearts," He writes our soul a message. He wants us to know there are no other words that can transform and change a soul into the image of His character.



Hearing and believing is receiving. Reach out today. Hear and hold to every promise He has given to us. Let the words of life ring out loud and clear today. Share them with others as the Lord commands us to do. They really are, "beautiful words, wonderful words, wonderful words of life".

May we do as the Lord commands and take this beautiful Word of God to a lost and dying world. That will truly show that we have heard His message and believe that He is one and will have no other gods before Him.

One way we can do this, of course, is through the various programs of the WMB. Let's support World Mission drives, Missionary Partnership Alliance, the Sharing Hands Ministry and Coins for Missions. God bless you all as you remain His faithful servants.

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CPMA...Coordinator Roger Fuester

As the holiday season progressed, we had many reminders – be they a TV broadcast, a letter from a charity, a bell ringer in front of a department store, or whatever – that many in our country are hurting. With unemployment slightly over 10 percent, it doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure that out. Given these circumstances, it is useful to go to Luke 16:19-31 and revisit the parable of Lazarus and the rich man.

Jesus first described the rich man: *“There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day.”* (v. 19). Clearly he was very well dressed, and had very expensive clothing. In antiquity, murex purple was extracted from shellfish and used to dye the clothing of the royal and religious. It has a special place in the history of attire, because it was not only rare but was costly to produce. According to one expert, it required 12,000 murex to extract 1.4 grams of pigment, barely enough for dyeing a garment the size of a Roman toga. This rich man also might have worn gold (or other precious metals) for ornament; we are not told.

In terms of his food, the dictionary defines “sumptuous” as something “of a size or splendor suggesting great expense.” So, he might have had too hearty an appetite (see Deut. 21:20) though he certainly did not end up in poverty (see Prov. 23:21). Other than that, it is not clear that he led an especially sinful or immoral life.

Then Jesus described Lazarus: *“And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover, the dogs came and licked his sores”* (vv. 20-21). Lazarus definitely qualifies as somebody who is hurting. Here, he is presented as somebody who cannot provide for himself. One of the reasons for his poverty is his illness.

Jesus is comparing two types of men -- a rich one and a poor one. Both men died (v. 22), but experienced much different fates. Lazarus was *“carried by the angels into the bosom of Abraham.”* Despite the fact that the rich man had not been guilty of gross outward sin, he found himself in hell in torment (v.23). Even though it had been within his power to do so, the rich man had done little during his

own lifetime to alleviate Lazarus' condition, yet he had the colossal nerve to ask Father Abraham to, *“send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame”* (v. 24). Obviously, he thought that Lazarus was under some kind of obligation to him.



In any case, Abraham responded as follows: *“Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.”* (v. 25). Note that Abraham did not attempt to characterize the rich man as a ogre of inhumanity, but only an individual who was self-seeking and not at all concerned about another. But God expects much more than adherence to the Ten Commandments – He expects conformity in one's heart to the Spirit and mind of Christ. There is abundant evidence that the mind of Christ was filled with compassion (see Matt. 9:36, 14:14, 15:32, 20:34 for example.)

Finally, it is interesting to note to whom Jesus was addressing this parable. Verse 14 tells that He was addressing the Pharisees, but that they treated Him with contempt. Why? Because they placed great importance on appearances and observing the Mosaic law, but were lovers of money. Here, Jesus was preaching that such people are in danger of perdition (see Matt. 25:31-46). And indeed they are – wedded to this life, and not concerned with the welfare of others. Therefore, let us maintain a spirit of compassion; it beats a Pharisical attitude any day of the week.

If you have not already done so, please be sure to pay your CPMA dues. Our goal is for every church in the region to be 100 percent in CPMA. We can do this.

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(because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.

(11) Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power:

(12) That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Verse 10 contains two phrases that relate to God's glory. The first phrase speaks of our Master being "glorified in his saints." This phrase expresses a *personal* relationship between the Lord and His saints. It describes a time when, independent of what the world might say, think or even notice, He is well pleased with His saints. They are living before Him in a way that brings Him pleasure to the extent He may *glory* in His children.

The second phrase of verse 10 speaks of a time when He has become "admired in all them that believe" – a time when the world also comes to see what He (privately, just between Him and us) already sees in us – His glory. How he chooses to make that revelation – to reveal His pleasure in us – is in His hand.

To make the distinction between the two phrases clear, let's consider a few examples from Scripture in which both of these relationships (that we bring Him glory, and that He pours His glory upon us) are manifested.

We bring Him glory; He glorifies us.

How are we to understand this private vs. public relationship between our worshipping and glorifying Him and Him glorifying us? The Master focused a major portion of His *Sermon on the Mount* (Matthew 5-7) on this topic. In Matthew 6:1-18, Christ considered as examples: our alms giving (v. 1-4), our praying (v. 5-8) and our fasting (v. 16-18). In each instance, we are to do our giving, our praying, our fasting in secret (so that no one but God knows).

Our actions are not performed for man's pleasure or praise, but for our Lord's pleasure. We do them to please Him, to glorify Him! We live by the admonition: "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." (Hebrews 11:6) Our Lord then, in His own time and in

His own way, rewards that pleasure or glory we bring to Him with His own outpourings of His favor and glory upon our lives.

Christ specifically criticized those who did their alms that "*they may have glory of men,*" (v. 2), or prayed "*that they may be seen of men*" (v. 5), or fasted "*that they may appear unto men to fast*" (v. 16). While people around us may recognize and even praise such outward actions, their recognition does not bring glory to our Lord. Our bringing glory to God must be *personal* – done for His eyes alone, because we seek to please (to glorify) Him alone.

Our Master, being *pleased with* – that is, *glorified in* – our behavior toward Him from our hearts, then *publicly* will reward us (makes known His favor and pleasure with us). While we are promised that our "*Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.*" (v. 4, 6, 18), this is not (cannot be) the reason that we worship Him. We worship and glorify Him because of who He is – our heavenly Father, our Lord and Savior.

Christ, our perfect example!

The world did not, at that time, understand that all Christ did while He walked this earth was done to please His Father. Nevertheless, Christ left us the record that "*... he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him.*" (John 8:29). This was true of Christ's life at all times, whether or not His actions at a given moment conformed to what the world or even His disciples expected. The Father Himself even bore public witness to His pleasure in His son: "*This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.*" (Matthew 17:5).

Christ's pleasing His Father included His willingness even to die at Calvary. The Father was glorified by the willing obedience of His Son. Christ thereby left this record: "*... Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God be glorified*



**Regional
Overseer
James Smith**

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in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him." (John 13:31-32). "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:" (Philippians 2:9).

The widow brings Him glory

In Mark 12:41-44, we have the account of when "Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury" (v. 41). I doubt that any of the people present realized who was watching their actions that day. The same is true today. Most people (even His children) do not think about the fact that our heavenly Father observes and notes everything we do, say or think. In fact, He beholds our every move and knows our every thought!

How many times have we as parents observed our children unbeknownst to them? Sometimes we were pleased and other times were displeased by what we saw. Is our heavenly Father pleased with what He sees in us today?

The people that day giving into the treasury did so in the spirit of giving unto the Lord. While men (His disciples) could see only the outward actions, Christ could also see the content of the hearts of those who gave that day. Note is made that "many that were rich cast in much" (v. 41). This is not meant as a disparaging remark against those who so gave. Surely, we all give joyfully unto the Lord from the abundance with which He has blessed us.

But afterwards, there came a widow who "threw in two mites, which make a farthing" (v. 42). Not much of an offering, you say, compared to what the others gave. She had not given to be seen of man; indeed, she surely would have been embarrassed had she thought that anyone might call public attention to her gift. Rather, she had given from her heart, which was *personally* noted by our Lord. Her giving thereby had brought pleasure (glory) to her Lord!

I can imagine the smile of satisfaction and pleasure that must have graced the Master's lips, and the quizzical look His disciples must have given Him. Knowing their thoughts, the Master explained: *'Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living'* (v.

43, 44). Her selfless action, which had glorified Her Lord, was so noted by Him that day!

The point to be made here is that our Lord takes *personal* pleasure – strictly between Himself and the one who has pleased him – in how we walk before Him each day. This widow's giving was not for show, but to please her Lord!

We do not know just what her thoughts were that day as she made her way forward to cast into the offering "all her living" (v. 44). We do not know the full extent of what this action meant, or what the consequences of her giving were to be. Perhaps she had doubts and concerns as to where her next meal might come, or to how she would meet her earthly obligations. Had she ever before in faith given so much (her all)? Why do it now? Perhaps she was stirred in her heart by the Spirit (1 John 2:20) to so give that day?

What we do know is that her Lord (Jesus Christ) indeed did see, and was very pleased with His child (this widow) that day. He was glorified by her adoration and by the faith she had placed her Lord as she gave "all her living" into His keeping.

The Shunammite brings Him glory

Perhaps, she was so moved as was another example from Scripture: the "great woman of Shunem" described in 2 Kings 4:8-37. That Shunammite, recognizing Elisha to be a "holy man of God" (v. 9), had many times kept the prophet Elisha in her home. She even had a special place prepared just for him (v. 9-10). She had asked nothing of Elisha or of the Lord in return for her happy service (v. 8).

Nevertheless, she had found favor with her Lord – had brought Him pleasure and glory (v. 9-13)! In recognition of this, Elisha was moved (unctioned) to promise her, and the Lord indeed blessed this barren woman with, a child (v. 14-17). What a perfect ending, you say? The Lord had blessed her heartfelt labor for Him in a way that was above and beyond what she could have thought to ask! Not so fast.

It came one day that this son of promise died in her arms (v. 20). What would she do; how would she respond? She turned unto the Lord. As she made her way to the man of God, her thoughts were "it shall be well" (v. 23). She must have had many thoughts as she made her way to Elisha.

How could God take away that which He had given her – that for which she had not asked? Yet when asked by Elisha "Is it well with thee? is it well with thy husband? is it well with the child? ... she

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answered, *It is well*" (v. 26). She did not (could not) grasp to what purpose God had given her a son when she was childless (v. 14) only to now have him taken away from her. Nevertheless, in her faith she knew that "*It is well.*"

The Lord had not revealed even to Elisha what troubled her. This was a matter between her and her Lord! Elisha sent his servant Gehazi, and later went himself, to where the child lay. There Elisha travailed until the child was restored to life (v. 32-36). "*Then she went in, and fell at his feet, and bowed herself to the ground, and took up her son, and went out.*" (v. 37).

We may assume that she continued to provide for Elisha each time he passed through Shunem, though she is not mentioned again until years later in 2 Kings 8:1-6. She continued to place her trust completely in the Lord, and to do all she could to show her reverence and worship of the Lord by ministering to His prophet Elisha.

Later in 2 Kings 8, Elisha warns her to leave as the Lord had called for a seven-year famine upon the land to awaken the people of Israel (v. 1). Though it meant forsaking and leaving all that she possessed in Shunem, she obeyed the words of Elisha (v. 2).

Seven years later at the close of the famine, she returned to find that others had occupied her land. She therefore appealed unto the king of Israel to restore her property (v. 3).

Until this time, her labors to please her Lord and His blessings upon her – including the giving of the child, and his being raised from the dead – were personal: between her and the Lord. The world at large had no such knowledge of her walk before the Lord, or His blessings poured out upon her. This was about to change – the Shunammite's worship and His blessings were about to become "front page news!"

Gehazi was in the house of the king; there telling him of the mighty acts of God which he had witnessed as the servant of Elisha (v. 4). As the Lord would have it (there are NO happenstances with the Lord!), "*... it came to pass, as he was telling the king how he had restored a dead body to life, that, behold, the woman, whose son he had restored to life, cried to the king for her house and for her land. And Gehazi said, My lord, O king, this is the woman, and this is her son, whom Elisha restored to life*" (v. 5).

Until this time, her labors to please her Lord and His blessings upon her – including the giving of the child, and his being raised from the dead – were personal: between her and the Lord.

She was able to give the king her personal testimony to her Lord's goodness. Her supplication was heard and her petition granted above what she might have imagined: "*And when the king asked the woman, she told him. So the king appointed unto her a certain officer, saying, Restore all that was hers, and all the fruits of the field since the day that she left the land, even until now.*" (v. 6).

We thus bring glory to our Lord by our pleasing Him.

We thus see that the key to our bringing glory to our Lord and Savior is contained in the phrase "*do always those things that please him*" in secret, and your Lord will reward that faithfulness with His glory showered upon you openly – but in His time and in His way. Famed Christian singer Andrae Crouch captured the spirit of "*bringing Him glory*" in 1971 in his song *My Tribute – To God Be the Glory*. In closing, let's consider those words:

Verse 1

How can I say thanks for the things You have done for me,
Things so undeserved, Yet You gave to prove Your love for me.
The voices of a million angels could not express my gratitude.
All that I am and ever hope to be, I owe it all to Thee.

Chorus

To God be the glory, To God be the glory,
To God be the glory, For the things He has done.
With His blood He has saved me, With His power He has raised me,
To God be the glory, For the things He has done.

Verse 2

Just let me live my life, Let it be pleasing, Lord, to Thee,
And if I gain any praise, Let it go to Calvary.
With His blood He has saved me, With His power He has raised me,
To God be the glory, For the things He has done.

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ABM...Coordinator Nancy Horchar

“And of some have compassion, making a difference.” Jude 22

“Is not this the fast I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Isaiah 58:6

“But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth: I humbled my soul with fasting; and my prayer returned into mine own bosom. I behaved myself as though he had been my friend or brother: I bowed down heavily, as one that mourneth for his mother.” Psalm 35:13-14

Sometimes we feel that our prayers appear to be hitting a brass ceiling. We give up or sometimes allow doubt, fear or maybe even anxiety to rule over our emotions. When deliverance has not come right away in a situation, we easily assume that our Mighty God – who is able for all things – hasn't or isn't going to answer our prayers.

The Word of God assures us that God does hear the prayers of the righteous, but we have to remember that He only acts in His timing. We shouldn't allow the absence of a quick answer to keep us from standing on His promises. The enemy far too often keeps us from doing what God wants us to do by causing these doubts, fear and other distractions.

Church, we must continue to pray and fast. I know that fasting is not as popular as it used to be, but it's going to take some real sacrifice on our part. I believe that our Lord is very pleased with those who not only pray, but also fast.

In Matthew 9:27-33, we read of how Jesus healed the blind and mute. Remember how Jesus didn't respond immediately to the blind men's pleas. He waited to see if they had faith.

Not everyone who says he wants help really believes God can help him. Jesus may have

waited and questioned these men to emphasize and increase their faith. So today, If it seems that God is slow in answering your prayers, perhaps He is testing you as He did the blind men. When situations come and they are tough – we must stand.



In the past, when a change was desired or warranted, not only was prayer done, but fasting, as well. Let us not give up because of what we may see in the natural. God is working. Let us make a difference in someone's life. Let us continue to pray and fast as the Lord directs. We will see changes in His time.

I'm trusting the Lord that all prayer bands are functioning in each local church. As we know, these prayer meetings are so very important in helping to meet the spiritual needs of each member.

May each one of you have a healthy and happy New Year.

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BTI...Coordinator Wendell Flick

The Church of God is going on to perfection. She will always continue to preach and teach the words of sound doctrine as we, as individuals and as the Body of Christ, continue to be spiritually perfected by the "washing of the water by the word."

In Titus 2:1, Paul wrote, "But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine."

God has placed BTI in the Church to teach and equip us in sound doctrine, to win the lost to Christ and His great Church and to train up all of us in the Body to do what God calls each one of us to do for Him. Praise God! God has placed us as members in the Body as it has pleased Him.

In 1 Timothy 4:16, Paul wrote, "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them. For in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee."

Pastors, BTI has many courses through correspondence. They can be taken individually or through group study.

God bless BTI.



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Around the region...

Regional leadership and members take part in the Eastern District Ministers Convention in New Rochelle, NY in October. This was the second bi-lingual event in the region in 2009, with activities taking place in English and Spanish.



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Final thoughts...

Assistant Editor Nora Edinger

The other night I had to get something from our daughters' dresser after they went to bed. I kept the room dark and tried to be as quiet as possible. But, our 3-year-old awoke from deep sleep and looked at me with alarm. "It's just mommy," I said. Satisfied that all was well, her eyes snapped back shut and she was asleep in seconds.

At the time, I was simply pleased we had avoided a major sleep disturbance. Later, I marveled at her quick acceptance of my presence. It could only come from knowing me well enough to realize that – even though she had no idea what I was doing there in the darkness of her room – she trusted that I was doing good.

It made me wonder. Are we that trusting of God? There are many times in our lives that are filled with the "dark" of trials or uncertainties. Yet instead of rolling over and resting in the Lord, we are often wide awake, fretting and shouting out questions as soon as we realize God is afoot.

"What are you doing, God?" "How long are you going to be, anyway?" "Are you sure you can

see?" And, off we go for a "flashlight," asking every other source we know for their report on how things are looking out there in the unknown.

Jesus said the kingdom of heaven belongs to those who trust God the way little children do. Maybe the peace of God in the *here and now* requires the same level of trust. Think about it. The next time you feel God moving in the darkness of your life, consider trusting Him enough to rest.

Let us say, like King David did in Psalm 56:3: "*What time I am afraid, I will trust in Him.*" For, surely, we know He will only be doing good.



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