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*"Christ caring for People
through People"*

October 30, 2011

Psalm 107:1-3 (The Message)

*Oh, thank God—he's so good! His love never runs out.
All of you set free by God, tell the world!
Tell how he freed you from oppression,
Then rounded you up from all over the place,
from the four winds, from the seven seas.*

Matthew 23:11-12 (The Message)

11-12 "Do you want to stand out? Then step down. Be a servant. If you puff yourself up, you'll get the wind knocked out of you. But if you're content to simply be yourself, your life will count for plenty.

Dear Friends in Christ,

By combining these two passages we begin to see an answer to the criticism of pushy Christians trying to force their beliefs on non-Christians. Some in our society complain that we should keep our beliefs to ourselves and limit our faith proclamations to the privacy of our places of worship and not venture to share them in the workplace and in social settings. The joy and freedom that we feel, when we are assured by the presence of the Holy Spirit that we have been liberated from our feelings of sin and guilt, simply overflow. Such salvation because of the goodness and mercy of God creates a desire to share with others.

The problem arises when we as the communicators become proud of our saved condition, as if we had anything to do with somehow earning it. When we recognize in full and honest humility that this is simply a gift of God to be shared in tenderness and love, the pushiness disappears. Otherwise, as Paul reminds us, it comes across that salvation is through our own works not gifted "by grace through faith" ***"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God not by works, so that no one can boast. Ephesians 2:8-9 (New International Version)"***

Sharing the before and after conditions of your personal experience of faith is not something to be pushed on unwilling listeners but something we ought to be ready to do when the opportunity naturally arises in conversation or especially when someone asks.

As stated in Living Faith *"We should not address others in a spirit of arrogance implying that we are better than they. But rather, in the spirit of humility, as beggars telling others where food is to be found, we point to life in Christ. We witness to God in Christ as the Way, the Truth, the Life, and invite others to accept from him the forgiveness of God. We are compelled to share this good news."*

Living God, teach us how to share the good news of your love and grace with humility, so that others may also know and receive the gift you have given us. Amen.

(Rev.) John McGurrin