

## Living out the Gospel – Tip #10

***Begin each day by challenging yourself to be a blessing to others.***



A long time ago, God came to an unassuming elderly couple named Abram and Sarai, and challenged them to step away from the comfortable life they knew, to follow him, be blessed by him, and to be a blessing to the world. This of course is the story of our faith ancestors found in the 12<sup>th</sup> chapter of Genesis. It wasn't enough that God blessed this family and led them to a new and fertile land, but in response to the blessing, this octogenarian couple was told in no uncertain terms, that they were to be a blessing – to not let God's blessings die with them. That's the thing about God's blessings; as much as they are for us, they are not ours exclusively. In fact, I would venture to say that if a blessing comes to us and ends with us, it ceases to be a blessing. Like the germs of a head-cold, blessings thrive when they are passed on to others.

A lot of things get passed on to others in this world, and they are not all good. Whether they be biological diseases, computer viruses, social media attacks, or advertisements that shame us into buying certain products, there is much out there to tear us down, break our spirits and make us feel inadequate. Imagine if in contrast to this reality, you and I were intentional in offering an alternative message; a message of love, acceptance, and kindness; a message of blessing.

When I randomly encounter another person, I have no idea what they are going through in their life right now. Maybe the distracted cashier at Wegmans just had her cherished dog put to sleep. Perhaps the elderly person driving "too slowly" in front of you just lost his spouse of 60 years to Alzheimers. Maybe the woman who rudely stepped in front of you in line at Target is having a really bad day in her ongoing struggles with clinical depression. Maybe the server at the restaurant who seemed a bit impatient and somewhat discourteous is exhausted beyond belief as she tries to hold down 3 jobs while struggling with the feelings of guilt because she and her two children are waiting to get into the RAIHN program and must live in the back of their broken-down minivan until they do.

See what I mean? We just don't know what those we encounter are going through. So, maybe we need to cut some slack to folks around us. Maybe we need to look for ways to reach beyond ourselves and to be a blessing. Nothing heroic is needed. You don't have to be a "caped crusader" or respond to a "bat signal" in the sky to be a hero. Maybe just a kind smile or a kind word are enough to give someone an ounce of hope. You never know what your smile or act of kindness will do for someone.

What a blessing to know that God loves you with all of his heart; that you are not junk; that you are precious in God's sight; that you are loved enough to share that blessing of love. What might the world around you look like if you passed that blessing on to others? What might the world around us look like if we all followed in the footsteps of that elderly couple, Abram and Sarai, seeking to be a blessing to all the world – no exceptions? Do we dare find out? Come to church on Sunday and let's see what happens!

Peace and Love,

Pastor Doug