

"IF YOUR NAME ALSO WERE JESUS"

Sept. 9, '90

DEEDS WE DO. ONE OF THE MOST POIGNANT QUESTIONS JESUS EVER ASKED WAS, "WHY DO YOU CALL ME "LORD, LORD" AND NOT DO WHAT I TELL YOU?" THERE CAN BE NO QUESTION THAT JESUS WANTED HIS DISCIPLES TO BE DOERS OF HIS WORDS AS WELL AS HEARERS. "BY THIS MY FATHER IS GLORIFIED". HE SAID, "THAT YOU BEAR MUCH FRUIT, AND SO PROVE TO BE MY DISCIPLES". JESUS WANTED HIS FOLLOWERS TO BE FRUITFUL DISCIPLES, DISCIPLE-WINNING DISCIPLES, LIFE-CHANGING DISCIPLES, PEOPLE HELPING DISCIPLES.

THINK ABOUT JESUS' WORDS ABOUT BEING FRUITFUL AND THEN THINK ABOUT THE COMMUNITY IN WHICH WE LIVE, OF WHICH THIS CHURCH IS A PART. THINK ABOUT THE PEOPLE YOU KNOW IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD WHO ARE LONELY, FRIGHTENED, OR DEPRESSED. THINK ABOUT THE NUMBER OF COUPLES YOU KNOW WHOSE MARRIAGES ARE IN TROUBLE. THINK ABOUT THE NUMBER OF PRESCRIPTIONS FILLED EACH DAY FOR TRANQUILLIZERS. THINK ABOUT THE NUMBER OF TRULY HAPPY PEOPLE YOU KNOW. COMPARED TO THE NUMBER OF MISERABLE, ISOLATED, FRIGHTENED PEOPLE YOU KNOW. THINK ABOUT THOSE THINGS AND HEAR JESUS' COMMAND ONCE AGAIN, "BY THIS MY FATHER IS GLORIFIED THAT YOU BEAR MUCH FRUIT, AND SO PROVE TO BE MY DISCIPLES"

IT HAS BEEN WELL SAID THAT IF CHRISTIANITY IS NOT DONE IN OUR DEEDS, IT IS NOT DONE INDEED! WE CHRISTIANS SIMPLY MUST BEAR FRUIT TO DARE TO LET OUR FAITH BE SEEN IN OUR ACTIONS. WE SIMPLY MUST LOVE OTHERS MORE SO THAT GOD CAN GIVE MORE OF HIMSELF THROUGH US. THERE ARE TOO MANY PEOPLE WITHIN THE REACH OF THIS CHURCH WHO ARE STRUGGLING WITH BROKEN DREAMS, WITH LONELINESS, GUILT, AND DESPAIR. THERE ARE TOO MANY PEOPLE WHO HAVE NOT AVAILED THEMSELVES OF THE ABUNDANT LIFE THAT JESUS CHRIST ALONE CAN GIVE, AND WE SIMPLY MUST REACH OUT TO THEM.

THERE ARE TOO MANY PEOPLE WITHIN THE REACH OF THIS CONGREGA- TION WHO HAVE YET TO SAY, "I LOVE JESUS CHRIST." IF OUR NAME ALSO WERE JESUS, THAT NAME JUST MIGHT PROMPT US TO HELP PEOPLE SAY IT, BECAUSE OF THE DEEDS THAT NAME WOULD LEAD US TO DO.

JESUS WHO IS CALLED JUSTUS MAY HAVE BEEN A MAN LIKE THAT. WHETHER HE WAS OR NOT, WE DO NOT KNOW. ALL WE KNOW IS THAT HE WAS A JEWISH CHRISTIAN WHO WAS A FRIEND OF PAUL, AND A MAN WHOSE NAME ALSO WAS JESUS.

BUT WE DO KNOW SOMETHING MORE ABOUT OURSELVES. WE KNOW THAT WHEN WE REPENTED OF OUR SINS AND CONFESSED CHRIST AS OUR SAVIOR, WE WERE GIVEN THE NAME CHRISTIAN. THIS MEANS THAT EACH OF US IS TO BE A LITTLE CHRIST, ANOTHER JESUS. FROM THAT MOMENT ON, WE ARE EXPECTED TO TAKE THE NAME OF JESUS WITH US WHEREVER WE GO. THIS MEANS THAT JESUS' NAME SHOULD AFFECT EVERY PERSON WE SEE, EVERY WORD WE SPEAK, AND EVERY DEED WE DO AS CHRISTIANS.

