

## A Guerilla Life

A wealthy couple went on a trip to Hawaii. One afternoon the wife went down to the beach. After a while her husband walked down to the beach. He saw a group of people there trying to help someone. He realized it was his wife. He ran up to them and said, "What are you doing?" They replied, "We're giving her artificial respiration." He said, "Artificial nothing. Give her the real thing. We can afford it!"

The wise men's gifts were some of the finest gifts of their day. They brought gold, frankincense and myrrh. Gold was a symbol of kingship and worldly riches and is considered one of nature's most perfect substances. Frankincense was a sweet perfume used in temple worship and temple sacrifices. As we give gold to a king, frankincense was given to a priest. As Jesus is our king, he is also our priest. In Latin, priest is pontifex which means bridge builder. Jesus is our High Priest, our bridge builder that bridges the gap between ourselves and God. And they gave Him myrrh it was not only used as embalming agent for wealthy people, it had many uses in the ancient world such as diaper rash, obesity and as an anesthetic.

These gifts were valuable and it is said that it may have helped Joseph and Mary make their escape to Egypt.

What gifts do we bring to Jesus. Well, every week we bring our tithes to church to support the ministry of the body of Christ. These are beautiful gifts that help us proclaim the Good News here in God's house and out in the mission field.

We also bring our spiritual gifts and talents to Jesus as we find ourselves in teaching positions, electronic assistance, leadership, music, helping and serving in the kitchen. We find ourselves watching children and cleaning the church. These are all gifts we give to Jesus too.

But there are other gifts that we bring to Jesus that are just as valuable to the church as our spiritual gifts and talents and our tithe offering.

What do we bring to Jesus who is rich beyond our understanding.

**What else could He want from us? What other gifts could He use for His glory.**

**Now I am not talking about a gorilla from the monkey family. I am talking about another word - guerilla - like in guerilla marketing.**

**I was a communication major and I spent some of my classes in advertising and marketing. I learned about guerilla marketing during that time.**

**The founder of guerilla marketing, Jay Conrad Levenson, says that guerilla marketing is an unconventional way to reach your customers. The strategy is to meet customers in unexpected and unorthodox places. It focuses more on creativity than money and traditional. It is meant to create a buzz among the public about your product.**

**Well, I want to talk to you about that same concept that will turn the world upside down in the name of Jesus. Guerilla gifts that we offer to the world will be unconventional, unexpected and unorthodox.**

**"Miss Murphy," was a dedicated young woman who taught the kindergarten-level Bible class in her Church school. She was very much loved by her little students. One morning, in the midst of the children memorizing the Twenty-third Psalm, the pastor dropped in for a brief visit. He listened attentively as the children recited, The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want... But when they got down to the last verse, Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life the pastor detected something wrong. Consequently, the children were asked to repeat the lines. And it was discovered that one little boy was saying, at the top of his voice, Surely good Miss Murphy shall follow me all the days of my life.**

**What does it mean to practice guerilla goodness?**

**Random acts of kindness was a catch phrase in the 90s and I would see it on bumper stickers. To practice guerilla goodness is to make our good intentional. It could be dropping a bag of groceries off to a home of a neighbor or co-worker that treats everyone badly. Maybe we can allow someone to take a parking space that we may have got to first or a good word to someone who is waiting in line.**

**While I was Christmas shopping, we had a nice conversation with a salesperson at South Bend Candies. We told her that we hadn't been here long and she began her conversation by inviting us to church. When we told her we were pastors she immediately went into her**

prayer requests for her family. Her daughters did not attend church and she had a burden on her soul for them. She asked us if we would pray for them. I said, "How about right now?" Rather surprised she said, "Yes, that would be fine." Now I want to tell you that the others who waiting in line were not too satisfied as I heard them huffing and puffing as I was praying. That was an act of goodness that I practice on a regular basis when someone asks me to pray for someone they love.

It is the gift of guerilla goodness as it is unexpected, unconventional and unorthodox, and creative.

The guerilla gift of goodness is intentional. We decide to get up every morning and ask God how can I give the gift of guerilla goodness today.

A novelist was doing some research for a book about life in a New England town during the first half of this century. He thought he might get some insight from a visit to the local cemetery. He soon discovered that almost all the tombstones erected during the period in question contained a short epitaph. And, without exception, each epitaph had only words of praise for the deceased. Words like "kind," "generous," "upstanding," "loving," appeared everywhere. This prompted the researcher to ask, "I wonder where they buried the sinners?"

Apostle Paul says that we all sin and fall short of the glory of God.

A woman went into an airport shop, bought a book to read and a package of cookies to eat while waiting to board her plane. She took a seat in the terminal and opened her book. But she was immediately distracted by the man sitting two seats to her right. Incredibly, the man actually was fumbling to open the package of cookies on the seat between them. And when he put his hand into the package, extracted a cookie, and ate it, she couldn't believe her eyes. She was so shocked to see a total stranger nonchalantly starting to eat her cookies, she didn't know what to do -- and she didn't want to create a scene. Finally, she reached over and removed a cookie from the package and ate it. "I'll show him," she said to herself. "No way is he going to eat all my cookies!" Whereupon, the man reached out for a second cookie, and ate it. "I'll show him," the woman told herself again, and she took a second cookie and ate it. Then the man ate a third cookie and she did likewise. And even though no message seemed to be getting through to the man, she persisted in carrying out this scenario until all the cookies were gone. As they boarded the

plane, she still persisted in her effort to try to humiliate the man, glaring at him with fire in her eyes. Then she took her seat, reached into her purse for a tissue, and there, in her purse, lay her still unopened package of cookies.

He allowed her to eat his cookies. This man gave her grace. That is the guerilla gift God calls us to give as well. We are to allow people to be who they need to be as they all grow in Christ. We give grace when we allow people to fail and fail and fail again. When we watch people learn hard lessons in life and offer grace, we extend the grace of God.

Og Mandino, author of *one of the World's Greatest Salesman*, says one of his rules of life is to treat each and every person we meet as if it may be the last time we ever see them. How would that change our actions and reactions to people? Practice by always speaking encouraging words and uplifting the other person. We are to allow people to be themselves. We would offer forgiveness and mercy on their shortcomings. We may not be as offended over things they say and do if we treated them as if we would never see them again. They don't have to know what we are thinking but we just treat them better than they have ever been treated.

When the mother of a family was placed on a strict diet by her physician, she and her husband decided that it would be a good time to change the entire family's eating habits: no red meat; no heavy gravies; no sugary desserts; mostly fish, vegetables and fish. The first evening's supper consisted of fish and cauliflower -- a new experience for Bernard, the youngest child. The family started to eat rather grimly until Bernard, chewing on a piece of fish, discovered a bone. He pulled it out of his mouth and asked, "Dad, what do I do with this?" "Put it where you're sure you won't eat it," said the father. Whereupon, Bernard immediately stuck it in his cauliflower.

Guerilla love is the last gift to offer and I see it as the most important. We can't have a guerilla life and we can't give guerilla grace and goodness without guerilla love. We are called to Love one another and Love your neighbor, it's good Christian language. Love one another...Love your neighbor." That's good Christian talk! But it is hard to love something that you hate.

There was a report on the evening news about a KKK rally in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Another group was there protesting against them. The two groups began shouting at each other. Then suddenly those protesting the Klan turned on a Klan member who got too close to

them. They threw him down and began beating him with sticks. But something happened which was unexpected. A black woman named Kesha Thomas threw herself on the man and protected him with her own body. The other people walked away in silence.

In a television documentary the story of Father Colby, a Catholic priest in Poland. The Nazis discovered that he had been hiding Jews and protecting them. They arrested him and sent him to one of their death camps. One day someone escaped from the camp, and the Nazis decided that ten people would die because of it. One of the them they selected was a Polish Army sergeant. He begged that he be spared because he had a wife and several children. Father Colby stepped forward and volunteered to take his place. He gave his own life. It was said the camp was filled with light because of what he did.

But that is the guerilla love. It takes a real risk to love the unlovable in life. It takes a step out of comfortable places and say I love Jesus enough to risk my confronting a problem in our community that needs someone to

The Wisemen came to Jesus and gave these gifts. The closer we come to Jesus the easier it is to practice this guerilla life and in our guerilla gifting transforms the world. In the midst, we are transformed. As we minister to others, we are ministering to ourselves. The glory of God touches as we touch others. The world is changed through our goodness, grace and love.