



NON-PROFIT



TAX-EXEMPT

"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" MARK 16:15

A New Year's Message – 2015

Greeting to everyone in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, our Savior. We had hoped to get a Christmas message out to you last month, as has become our custom. However, forces beyond our control made it impossible to do so. Anne, who is our primary writer, had major oral surgery, got a rash from the antibiotics that came with it, and is still in the process of recovering. Both of us were hoping to get a new ebook out for Christmas. But by the time it finally went out Christmas was just a few days away. This year we are hoping that ebook sales will be even better than last year. Already they have become international. Of the ones we know about, sales have been made in at least five countries so far in four continents!

If we had gotten the Christmas message out as we planned, the subject was to be a simple one. With all the gift giving we Christians do during the holiday season, there is usually one person missing from our gift list. That is the guest of honor, who is so often overlooked among the gaiety of festivities. With all the houses lit up during the Christmas season, one in particular caught our eye. In colorful lights on the front lawn of a home the message read "Happy Birthday Jesus." It was a nice reminder that it is not the birthday of any of us during Christmas. It is the birthday of Jesus Christ! And He should be the one who receives the bounty of gifts from those whom He has redeemed!

So what kind of a gift can we possibly give to Jesus? Shall we build a statue in His honor? No. God has said, *"Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth"* (Exodus 20:4 KJV). Do we light a candle for Him? No. Jesus wants us to be living candles to Him! He said to those who love Him, *"You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven"* (Matthew 5:14-16 NIV).

Do we build a new church for Him? No. *"Heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool. What kind of house will*

you build for Me?" says the Lord. 'Or where will My resting place be? Has not My hand made all these things? You stiff-necked people, with uncircumcised hearts and ears! You are just like your fathers: You always resist the Holy Spirit!'" (Acts 7:49-51 NIV). The Lord wants us to be living temples to His glory so that the Holy Spirit may live in our heart and lead us according to God's will. If you truly want to please Christ, and live for Him, *"Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body"* (1 Corinthians 6:19-20 NIV).

The best gifts we can give to the Lord are our love (Deut. 6:5), trust (Proverbs 3:5-6), obedience (1 Samuel 15:22-23), and spirit (Romans 8:13-14). When we allow the Holy Spirit to control our life we put to death the old carnal nature that causes us to sin (see Romans 7:18-25). So what is the difference between our natural carnal nature and the nature that is controlled by the Holy Spirit? *"The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires"* (Galatians 5:19-24 NIV). *"...Live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature"* (Galatians 5:16 NIV).

It doesn't have to be Christmas time to give Jesus Christ the gift He wants most from you. Get out of the driver's seat and allow God's Spirit to control the direction of your life! And don't be a back seat driver! *"Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths"* (Proverbs 3:5-6 KJV).

Have a great 2015 everyone! *Eric and Anne Kaestner*

