Bread on the Water

WHY GOOD COMES BACK

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FORGE & BELLOWS

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Scripture is quoted from the King James Version. Where another translation is used, it is named in the text.

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A note on two words

You are going to see G-d and L-rd on every page of this book, and you deserve to know why before you decide it's a typo.

It's an old practice. Deuteronomy tells Israel to tear down the names of the nations' gods off the high places, and then adds a line. "Ye shall not do so unto the L-rd your G-d." (Deuteronomy 12:4) Don't handle His name the way you handle theirs. Out of that one sentence came a habit of not writing the Name anywhere it might later be erased, thrown out, or wiped off a screen.

I know the argument against it. The English word is a title, not the Name, and the practice binds nobody. I'm not requiring it of you. Write it however you write it.

I do it anyway, and here's the honest reason. It makes me stop. Every single time. In a book about doing small things in places where nobody is checking, I'm not going to skip the smallest one on the page.

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Cast It Anyway

This book didn't cost you anything. Somebody handed it to you, or sent you a link, and you opened it because it was free.

Hold onto that. It's going to matter before we're done.

There's a line in Ecclesiastes that people quote at fundraising banquets without ever reading what sits around it.

> *"Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days."*
>
> ECCLESIASTES 11:1

Read it slowly and it stops sounding inspirational and starts sounding insane.

Bread and water don't mix. Bread on water is bread ruined. Throw a loaf into the surf and you don't get a harvest, you get a mess. Every fisherman in Israel knew that. Every housewife grinding grain knew that. Solomon knew it too, and he said it anyway, which means he meant something the picture only makes sense of once you stand where he stood.

The scholars give us two readings, and I don't think we have to pick.

The first is commerce. Israel was a trading nation on a trade route, and grain went out on ships. A merchant loaded his best wheat onto a boat and watched the boat disappear over the horizon. No tracking number. No insurance. No way to know if the ship was still afloat by Tuesday. Months later, if the sea behaved and the captain was honest, something came back... and what came back was more than what left. The Hebrew literally reads "send thy bread." Send it out. Let it go where you can't follow it.

The second reading is charity. The old rabbis read that verse as giving to people who can't repay you, and they read the next verse as the instruction for how widely to do it.

> *"Give a portion to seven, and also to eight; for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth."*
>
> ECCLESIASTES 11:2

Send it out. Send it wide. You don't know what's coming.

That's the same act either way. A man puts something valuable into a current he does not control, and then he waits without a guarantee.

Now look at what Solomon builds around that verse, because this is where the chapter stops being a nice thought and starts being a way to live.

> *"If the clouds be full of rain, they empty themselves upon the earth."*

ECCLESIASTES 11:3

"He that observeth the wind shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap."

ECCLESIASTES 11:4

"As thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit... even so thou knowest not the works of G-d who maketh all."

ECCLESIASTES 11:5

"In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that."

ECCLESIASTES 11:6

Four times in six verses, Solomon says the same thing. You do not know. You don't know what evil is coming. You don't know which way the wind turns. You don't know how the Spirit moves. You don't know which seed takes.

And then, having established that you know almost nothing, he tells you to throw your bread in the water.

That isn't a contradiction. That's the entire point. Uncertainty is not a reason to hold the loaf. Uncertainty is the exact condition under which the loaf gets thrown.

The farmer who stands at the edge of his field studying the sky never plants anything. He's not lazy. He's careful. He's waiting for conditions that guarantee a return, and because those conditions never arrive, his field stays empty and his barn stays clean and his family

stays hungry. Meanwhile the man who sowed in the morning and sowed again in the evening has grain coming up in places he doesn't even remember planting.

Careful people don't feed anybody.

I've watched believers do this with goodness for twenty years. We wait. We wait until we can afford it. We wait until we're sure the person deserves it. We wait until we've prayed about it long enough to feel released, which is sometimes obedience and is sometimes just a spiritual word for stalling. We wait until we are good enough people to be the kind of person who does that sort of thing.

And here's what I want to put on the table in this first chapter, because the rest of the book unpacks it.

G-d never asked you to be good. He asked you to do good.

Those are not the same thing, and the difference is not a word game. One is a character rating you can never actually verify, and nobody has ever been able to tell you what score passes. The other is a verb with a body attached to it. One happens inside you where no one can check it. The other happens in a parking lot, at a register, in a waiting room, in a driveway, where somebody feels it.

Goodness is a reputation. Doing good is a decision. You can hold a reputation your whole life without it ever leaving your hands.

Bread that stays on the shelf stays yours. It also stays exactly one loaf.

So this book has a simple argument, and I'll tell you now instead of making you wait for it. Do good. Everywhere. Always. Not because you are good, and not because it's safe, and not because you can see where it lands. Do it because it was commanded, because the Kingdom moves that way, and because something comes back that you did not put in the water.

That last part needs a fence around it, and I'll build that fence properly later. What comes back is not a transaction. This is not karma with a King James accent. You do not put good in a machine and pull a lever and receive a car. Anyone who has done good and been hurt for it knows better, and if that's you, I'm not going to insult you by pretending the math always works out inside your lifetime.

But scripture keeps saying something returns. "He that watereth shall be watered also himself." (Proverbs 11:25) "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." (Galatians 6:9) After many days, Solomon says. Due season, Paul says. Both of them are telling you the same thing about timing, which is that you don't set it.

Something comes back. You just don't get to schedule the tide.

Which brings us back to how this book got into your hands.

It cost you nothing, and that was on purpose. It's bread, and it's in the water. I don't know where it lands, who reads it, what city it ends up in, or what somebody

does after they close it. I wrote it and I let it go, which is the only honest way to write a book that says what this one says.

You're holding the argument and the demonstration at the same time.

DO THIS

Today, do one good thing for somebody who cannot pay you back and will probably never know it cost you anything. Not a project. Not a ministry initiative. Something ordinary and immediate. Pay for the order behind you. Text the person you keep meaning to text. Fix the thing you were going to report. Give the tip that embarrasses you a little.

Do it before you finish the book. Do it while the wind is still wrong and the clouds are still unclear and you still don't know how it turns out.

That's how bread gets wet.

The rest of these pages tell you why it works.

TWO

Good People Drowned

Somebody in that flood was a good neighbor.

We don't talk about him. We tell the story with the animals and the rainbow and we let the world outside the ark stay faceless, because faceless is easier. But scripture says the earth was filled with violence, and it does not say every last person in it was a monster. In a population that size, ordinary decency existed. Somebody fed a widow down the road. Somebody stayed faithful to his wife for forty years. Somebody worked hard, told the truth, raised his kids right, and was known in his town as a good man.

He drowned.

Same water. Same day. No exemption for being nicer than his neighbors.

That's the sentence the whole book turns on, so sit in it a second before you argue with it. If goodness had been the boarding pass, the ark would have needed more rooms.

Here's the belief this drowns, and almost everybody carries some version of it. Good people are fine. G-d grades on a curve, and as long as your good outweighs

your bad, it works out. Most people who say that have never once asked what the passing score is.

So ask it. What's the number? Sixty percent? Does a lie cancel a kindness, or does it take three kindnesses to cancel one lie? Do the years before you knew better count? Who is holding the scorecard, and has anyone ever seen it?

Nobody can answer, because there is no scale. It isn't a standard. It's a feeling people use to avoid a real accounting. And it falls apart the second a flood shows up, because a flood doesn't grade on a curve.

Now the objection, and it's a fair one, because scripture itself raises it.

Genesis calls Noah good. "Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations." (Genesis 6:9) When the door opens, G-d says it again. "For thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation." (Genesis 7:1) So wasn't goodness the boarding pass after all?

Watch the order. Order is everything here.

Verse 8 comes first.

> *"But Noah found grace in the eyes of the L-rd."*
>
> GENESIS 6:8

Grace. Before one word about his character. The New Living Translation says it plainly: "But Noah found favor with the L-rd." Verse 8 is grace. Verse 9 is character. The description of Noah as a just man doesn't come before the grace, it comes after it, which means his goodness is not the reason he was chosen. It's what grace produced

in a man who was already chosen.

And then comes the part almost nobody quotes.

> *"Thus did Noah; according to all that G-d commanded him, so did he."*
>
> GENESIS 6:22

He did it. Not he was moved by it, not he agreed with it, not he felt a burden about it. He did it. Every plank, every cubit, every animal, for decades, in front of neighbors who had every reason to laugh.

Grace, then character, then obedience. That's the order on the page.

Hebrews goes back and names what kind of righteousness G-d was looking at when He looked at Noah. "By faith Noah, being warned of G-d of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house... and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." (Hebrews 11:7)

Heir. Not earner. It was given to him, the way an inheritance is given, and it came by faith, and faith showed up as a boat.

The Hebrew puts a fingerprint on it. Noah's name is two letters, nun and chet. The word for grace is CHEN, chet and nun. The same two letters, turned around. His name is grace spelled backward. The rabbis noticed that long before we did, and whatever you make of it, it's hard to read Genesis 6:8 and call it a coincidence.

So here's what actually separated Noah from his good neighbor.

It was not that Noah was a better man. It was not that his ledger came out ahead. It was that G-d gave him grace, and then gave him a specific instruction, and he did the specific thing he was told to do while everyone else went on being generally decent.

Generally decent didn't float.

I want to be careful here, because this can be heard as cruelty toward people who lost their lives, and that's not what's being said. The point isn't that goodness is worthless. Goodness is real, and the world is better for it, and G-d is not indifferent to it. The point is narrower and sharper than that. Goodness was never the mechanism. It cannot carry the weight we keep putting on it. When people say "I'm a good person" as their entire spiritual position, they are standing on something that has never once held.

And we do the same thing at a smaller scale every week.

I know I do. I have been generally good in seasons when I knew exactly what I was supposed to do and wasn't doing it. I was kind. I was pleasant. I gave people the benefit of the doubt. And the whole time there was one specific instruction sitting in front of me, and I substituted a good disposition for the thing I'd been told. Being good is a comfortable place to hide from doing good, because nobody can audit it and you always pass your own inspection.

Noah's neighbor didn't need to become a better man. He needed to get on the boat.

There's a door in this story that gets missed. Peter says Noah was "a preacher of righteousness" (2 Peter 2:5), which means those decades of hammering were not silent. The work itself was the announcement. Anybody could have walked up the ramp. The ark was the biggest invitation ever built, standing in plain view for a hundred years, and the way in was never a character test.

It was a door. One door. G-d tells him how many to build. "The door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof." (Genesis 6:16) Not a door for the righteous and a side entrance for everybody else. One way in, open the whole time it was being built, and every person who drowned walked past it.

And when the rain came, Noah didn't shut it. "And the L-rd shut him in." (Genesis 7:16) The man who built the door didn't control the door. He just went through it.

Centuries later a carpenter's son stood in front of a crowd and said, "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved." (John 10:9)

Same offer. Same shape. Still not a character test. Still one way in, standing open, while good people walk past it on their way to being good.

Which brings us back to where chapter one left off. If goodness isn't the mechanism, then the Christian life is not a lifelong project of becoming nice enough. It's grace received, and then the specific thing you were told, done.

That's the replacement, and the next chapter is where it gets a name.

DO THIS

Somewhere in your life there is one specific thing you already know you're supposed to do. Not a category. Not "be more generous." The actual thing. The call you've been meaning to make. The apology with a name attached to it. The money you said you'd send. The conversation you keep rescheduling in your head.

You've been covering it with general goodness for a while now. We all do.

Do that one thing today. Not a version of it. It.

That's the plank you've been putting off, and the boat doesn't float without it.

THREE

Do Good. Everywhere. Always.

It started on a t-shirt.

I want that on the record before anybody dresses it up. Three words on cotton, a boomerang shadow behind them, and a line underneath that said because good comes back. I was building something that could fund ministry without begging for it, and the thing needed a phrase, and that's the phrase that came.

Then the phrase started preaching to me, and I found out it was never mine.

Do Good. Everywhere. Always.

That's the replacement chapter two promised. Not be good. Do good. And once you see where it comes from, you'll understand why I can't put it down.

Peter is standing in a Roman officer's house, which is the last place a Jewish fisherman expected to be standing, and he has to explain Jesus to a room full of people who never met Him. Three years of ministry. Every sermon, every healing, every argument with the religious, every night on a hillside. Peter has to get all of it into a sentence.

Here's the sentence.

> *"How G-d anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for G-d was with him."*
>
> ACTS 10:38

Who went about doing good.

That's the biography. Peter was there for the whole thing, and when he had one shot to say what the Man was like, he did not say He was good. He was, and Peter knew it better than anybody, and he still reached for a verb.

The Greek makes it sharper. The phrase "doing good" is EUERGETŌN, a present active participle, which is a technical way of saying it never stops. It isn't a record of things He did. It's a motion He was in. If you had asked anyone who watched Him what Jesus was doing right now, at any hour of any day, the answer would have been the same answer. He's out there doing good.

Now watch the order in that verse, because the order is the whole doctrine.

G-d anointed Him. Then He went.

The anointing came first, and the anointing is not the destination. We have built an entire church culture around getting anointed, seeking the anointing, breaking through into the anointing, as if the oil were the finish line. Acts 10:38 says the oil was the starting gun. He was anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power, and what the power produced was a man walking around doing good to people who could not do

anything for Him.

If your anointing has not moved your feet, it may not be anointing. It may be atmosphere.

So take the three words one at a time, because each one is carrying something.

Do.

A verb. Not a state, not a disposition, not a reputation. Something with a body attached to it and a time stamp on it. You can lie about being good for forty years and never be caught. You cannot lie about doing good, because doing good happens where somebody else is standing, and they either felt it or they didn't.

Paul says the same thing in a way that ought to end the argument. "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which G-d hath before ordained that we should walk in them." (Ephesians 2:10) The New Living Translation puts it plainly: "so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago."

The word for workmanship is POIEMA. It's where we get the word poem. You are a made thing, and you were made for something, and Paul names the something. Good works. But look at what he tells you to do with them. Walk in them.

That's the part we miss. Good works are not evidence you produce to prove you're the right kind of person. They are a road that was laid before you got here. Walking is not how you earn the road. Walking is what a road is for.

And notice what Paul is not saying, because verse 10 sits directly after verse 9, and verse 9 exists to slam a door. "Not of works, lest any man should boast." He closes the door on works as the entry, and then in the very next breath he opens the door on works as the path. Not the way in. The way you walk once you're in.

Everywhere.

Peter's word was "went about." The Greek is DIĒLTHEN, from the verb for traveling through. He moved. The good did not happen at a location; it happened along a route. Nearly everything Jesus did that we remember happened somewhere other than a sanctuary. A well at noon. A roadside. A tax office. A wedding that ran out of wine. A borrowed boat. A graveside. A dinner table, over and over again, with the exact people the religious crowd had already written off.

He had a place to preach and He used it. But the doing happened out in the country, in traffic, at work, at lunch, in the places where you already are and would rather not be spiritual.

That's why everywhere is in the middle of the phrase instead of at the end. It's the hinge. Do good at church and you're a church member. Do good everywhere and you're something else entirely. We'll spend a whole chapter on this later, because there's a fight over the word everywhere that I need to walk you through carefully.

Always.

Back to that participle. Continuous. Not seasonal, not scheduled, not when it's convenient or when the person deserves it or when you're in a good place spiritually.

Solomon already said it in the same chapter we started this book in. "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good." (Ecclesiastes 11:6) Morning and evening. Two sowings, one day, and no way to know which one takes.

Always is the hardest of the three words, and it's the last chapter of this book for a reason. Doing good once is a nice day. Doing good when it stopped being rewarding is a life.

And then there's the line I put under the three words on that shirt. Because good comes back.

I'm going to be honest with you about that line, and I'd rather do it now than let you carry a wrong idea through six more chapters. That line is not a mechanism. It is not karma, it is not the universe balancing a ledger, and a boomerang is a better logo than it is a theology. The return is not the reason you do this. I'll deal with what it actually is at the end, because the end is where it belongs and because some of you have done good and bled for it and you deserve more than a slogan.

But I left the line on the shirt, and I'm keeping it in the title of this book, because scripture will not stop saying it. Something comes back. Solomon says after many

days. Paul says due season. Neither of them says next week.

So that's the name. Do Good. Everywhere. Always. It fits on a shirt, it fits in a sentence, and it fits over a whole life, which is the only real test a motto ever has to pass.

Now, before I take one more step, I have to stop and deal with a verse that could tear all of this down.

Because there is a crowd standing in front of Jesus at the end of everything, and they have works. Real ones. Good ones. Done in His name, in public, with power. And He tells them He never knew them.

If I walk past that verse, this whole book is a very well-made mistake. So the next chapter is where I stop and face it.

DO THIS

Do one good thing today in the least spiritual place you go. Your job. The shop floor. The school pickup line. The supply room. Wherever you are when nobody thinks of you as a church person.

Not a tract. Not an invitation. Not a conversation you steer. Just good, done well, by you, on the clock, where it can't be mistaken for a ministry activity and can't be counted on any report.

He went about doing good. He was not going anywhere religious when He did most of it.

FOUR

The Ones He Never Knew

There is a sentence in the Gospels that should stop anybody who writes a book about doing good.

> "*Many will say to me in that day, L-rd, L-rd, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*"
>
> MATTHEW 7:22-23

Read the résumé they hand Him. Prophecy. Deliverance. Wonderful works. All of it in His name, which means they were not doing it under some other banner. This is not a crowd of pagans wandering into the wrong line. These people were in ministry.

And whatever you believe happened when they cast out devils, something happened. Nobody keeps a list like that if nothing ever worked.

They have works. Good ones. Public ones. Powerful ones. And the verdict is depart from me.

If doing good were the mechanism, that verse could not exist. So either the verse is a problem for this book or the verse is the most important thing in it. I think it's the second one, and here's why.

Look at the two words He uses. "I never knew you."

The Greek is EGNON, from GINOSKO. It is not the word for knowing a fact. It's the word for knowing a person. And the reason that matters is that Jesus picked up the same verb one other time, on the last night, in the prayer He prayed out loud where the disciples could hear it.

> *"And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true G-d, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."*
>
> JOHN 17:3

Know. Same verb, and the tenses are the whole story. In John 17 it's the ongoing kind, a knowing that keeps happening. In Matthew 7 it's flat and finished. Not once, not ever.

Jesus defines eternal life as knowing Him, and then tells a crowd holding a stack of ministry credentials that the one thing they never did was that.

So Matthew 7:23 isn't G-d being hard to please. It's G-d being consistent. He said life is knowing Me. They brought Him everything but that.

Now put a second scene beside it, because Matthew does, twenty chapters later.

The sheep and the goats. The King separates them, and He tells the ones on His right what they did. You fed Me. You gave Me a drink. You took Me in. You clothed Me. You came to Me in prison.

And they argue with Him.

> *"Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, L-rd, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?"*
>
> MATTHEW 25:37-39

When did we ever do that.

Hold the two scenes side by side, because the contrast is not subtle.

The first crowd knows exactly what they did and can itemize it. The second crowd cannot remember doing anything. The first crowd is sent away. The second crowd is welcomed home.

Group one had a ledger. Group two had a life.

That tells you something about how the good works in a life that's actually connected to Him. It stops being an event you log. You feed somebody on a Tuesday and by Friday you have genuinely forgotten, not because it didn't matter but because it wasn't rare. You don't keep receipts for breathing.

Here's the honest part. The people who can list it for you are usually the people it's least native to.

So what is the actual variable between those two groups?

It is not the works. Both groups have them. Nobody in either scene shows up empty-handed, and that alone kills the reading where Matthew 7 is a warning against doing too much.

It is not awareness. One group is fully aware and rejected. The other is unaware and received.

The variable is whose they were.

The first crowd used His name. The second crowd belonged to Him. You can borrow a name. You cannot borrow a father.

Which means I have to say the thing this whole book depends on, and say it plainly enough that nobody can miss it later.

Do Good, Everywhere, Always is not a way to get to G-d. It is what people who already belong to G-d do with their hands. It's the walk of sons, not the application of strangers. Take the Person out of it and you don't have DGEA. You have decency with a Bible verse stapled to it, and Matthew 7 says exactly where that road ends.

I have watched this in the mirror, so I'm not preaching down at anybody. There have been stretches where the works were real, the results were real, people were genuinely helped, and my actual relationship with Him was a subject I taught rather than a thing I had. Ministry will let you get away with that longer than any other line of work. Nobody audits it. The calendar stays

full. And the whole time you're building a résumé for a Man who is going to tell you He wanted you, not it.

Now let me guard the other ditch, because there's one on both sides of this road.

Some of you just read Matthew 7 and got scared of doing good. That's the wrong lesson and it's the one people most often walk away with. Jesus never tells that crowd their works were the problem. He doesn't say you should have prophesied less. The problem was never the doing. The problem was that the doing was the entire relationship.

And look at verse 21, which sits right above the whole thing. "Not every one that saith unto me, L-rd, L-rd, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."

He that doeth. Even in the verse that warns you about works, the verb is still there. Jesus never once tells anybody to stop doing. He tells them whose will they're supposed to be doing, and He tells them the difference will not be visible on a stage.

So the order stands, and it's the same order we found in Acts 10:38 in the last chapter. Anointed, then went. Known, then doing. Grace first, in Noah's case, then character, then obedience. Scripture keeps building it in the same sequence and we keep trying to start at the end because the end is the part people can see.

Bread goes in the water because a son throws it. Not so somebody will decide he's a son.

One more thing before the act, because it's the piece that makes this chapter livable instead of terrifying.

The sheep in Matthew 25 were not anxious. Nothing in that scene suggests they spent their lives checking their standing. They were just going along feeding people, and they were so unaware of accumulating anything that they questioned the King's own account of it. That is what security looks like from the outside. Not certainty about your score. No interest in the score at all, because the relationship was never scored.

That's what I want for you, and what I want to keep for myself.

The next chapter is where I show you something I did not expect to find. Doing good was already filed somewhere in scripture, under a heading none of us would have put it under, and the moment you see the heading you'll understand why this isn't a side ethic bolted onto your faith.

DO THIS, IN THIS ORDER

Take ten minutes today, on the clock, with a timer if you need one. No Bible study, no list, no request, no sermon prep, no journaling about yourself. Just you and Him, with nothing to bring and nothing to ask for. Most of us have not done that in months and can't say so out loud.

Then go do the good thing.

Ten minutes, then the doing. That's the order the whole book runs on, and it's the only order that keeps a

life like this from turning into a résumé.

FIVE

Already an Altar

I found this chapter by getting caught.

I had been preaching a line I liked. I said that sacrifice, everywhere else in scripture, is an event-word. A thing with a date on it. An animal, a knife, a morning. And then Paul comes along in Romans 12 and says living sacrifice, and I said he was doing violence to the word, taking something that ends and forcing it to keep breathing.

It preached well. It was also wrong.

I went to check it, the way you're supposed to check things before you put them in a book, and the word would not cooperate. The figurative use was already there. It was there before Paul reached for it. And the correction handed me something better than the line I lost, which is usually how that goes.

Here is what I found instead.

> *"By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to G-d continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name. But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices G-d is well pleased."*

Read verse 16 again slowly.

To do good. And to share what you have. For with such sacrifices G-d is well pleased.

The word is THYSIA. It is the altar word. It is the word for the thing you bring, kill, and burn, the word that carried a thousand years of smoke and blood and priests and mornings at the tabernacle door. And the writer of Hebrews takes it, and puts two things under it.

One. Praise from the lips, offered continually.

Two. Doing good and sharing with people.

He does not say doing good is evidence of worship. He does not say it flows out of worship, or points toward worship, or is a good response to worship. He calls it a sacrifice. He puts it on the altar and says G-d is well pleased with it.

That's the floor under this entire book, and I didn't have to argue my way to it. It was already written down.

And notice how verse 15 opens, because the last chapter is standing right there in the first two words. "By him." Not by your effort, not on your own account, not as a way to get in. By Him. The guardrail is built into the same sentence as the command. Hebrews will not let you take the altar without the Person.

Romans 12:1 is where most of us learned the word. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of G-d, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto G-d, which is your reasonable service." The word for living there is ZOSAN, a present active

participle. Continuous. Still going.

That's the second participle we've run into. Acts 10:38 had EUERGETŌN, continually doing good. Romans 12:1 has ZOSAN, continually living. Two verses, two grammars, both refusing to stop.

And Paul isn't straining the word, which is the part I had wrong. He uses it the same way twice more. When the church at Philippi sent him money while he sat in prison, he wrote back and called their envelope "an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to G-d." (Philippians 4:18) Money. Mailed. Called incense.

Peter says it too. "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to G-d by Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 2:5)

So the category was already open. Hebrews just walked over and filed doing good inside it.

Now let me pressure-test this before somebody else does, because there's a cheap version of what I just said and I don't want it in my mouth.

The cheap version is everything is worship. You've heard it. Your job is worship, your coffee is worship, your workout is worship, and when everything is worship, nothing is, and the word stops meaning anything at all.

Hebrews doesn't say that. Hebrews names two. Praise from the lips, and doing good and sharing. Not the whole of life, undifferentiated. Two specific offerings,

named on purpose, and one of them is the one we've spent our entire church culture treating as optional.

That's a narrower claim and a much sharper one. I'm not telling you everything counts. I'm telling you the thing you thought was extracurricular was on the altar the whole time.

Which means we've been running the arithmetic backwards.

We built a world where worship is the twenty-two minutes before the sermon, and doing good is the outreach committee, and if the budget gets tight the outreach committee is what you cut, because worship is the ministry and the other thing is a program.

Hebrews just told you they're the same offering.

There's one more layer here and I'm going to touch it lightly, because it deserves its own book and it may get one.

Look at what heaven is actually doing while we debate our service order. The four living creatures "rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, L-rd G-d Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come." (Revelation 4:8) And every time they give glory, the twenty-four elders fall down and worship. (Revelation 4:9-10)

Nothing in that room is scheduled. There is no slot. Worship there is not an event on a calendar, it is the air in the building. It's ambient. It's the ongoing condition of the place.

Now pray the prayer He taught us with that room in view. "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it

is in heaven." (Matthew 6:10)

As it is in heaven. If the condition up there is unbroken worship, then that prayer is not asking for a visitation on Sunday. It is asking that earth start running the way that room runs. Worship as atmosphere instead of appointment.

Earth is practice for heaven. And if heaven is ceaseless worship, then a life that keeps worship in a compartment isn't merely incomplete. It's rehearsing the wrong thing.

Put Hebrews 13 next to Revelation 4 and something lands.

Both of the offerings Hebrews names are the offerings heaven already runs on. Praise, continually. And doing good, which is what love does when it has hands and a neighbor.

So the man who stays late to fix a co-worker's mistake so nobody gets written up for it is not doing something adjacent to worship. He is on the altar. The woman who buys groceries for a family she barely knows and never mentions it is not being nice. She is offering a sacrifice, and scripture says G-d is well pleased with it, and neither one of them will feel a thing while it's happening.

Worship you can feel is a gift. Worship that costs you something and produces no feeling at all is the kind Hebrews is talking about.

That's Do Good. That's the first word of the three, and it has an altar under it.

The next chapter takes the second word. Everywhere. And that one has a fight around it, because there's a whole movement teaching believers to take the places they're standing, and I've got a different word for what they're describing.

DO THIS

Today, do one good thing that costs you actual money. Not your time. Money. An amount you will notice on Friday.

Then walk away from it the way you walk away from the offering plate.

You don't follow the plate down the aisle to see where your check ends up. You don't ask the usher for a report. You put it in, and it leaves your hand, and it stops being yours.

Do that with the good thing. Put it in and let it go.

That's an altar, and you don't get to take anything back off of one.

SIX

A Thousand Mountains

Everywhere is the second word, and it's the one that started a fight.

There are seven places that shape any culture. Family. Faith. Education. Government. Media. Arts and entertainment. Business. Whatever else changes in a society, those seven are where it changes.

There's a way of talking about those seven that treats them as mountains to be taken. Take the mountain. Reclaim the culture. Get to the top before somebody hostile gets there first.

I was asked to explain the mountains before I'd ever agreed to take them.

I've watched where that road goes, and I have a different word for what happens on it. Coercion.

So here's what I hold instead, and I'll put it in one sentence before I unpack it.

The mountains are already G-d's. I RADAH them because I'm a son anyway.

RADAH, pronounced rah-DAH, is the Hebrew verb G-d uses in Genesis 1:28 when He tells the first man to have dominion. I'm not going to soften it. The lexicons

give it an edge... to rule, to tread down, to subjugate. Dominion is real authority and it isn't a gentle word. The question is not whether a son rules. The question is what kind of ruling a son does, and scripture answers that question by putting a fence around the word almost everywhere it goes.

Start with whose ground it is.

> *"I will take no bullock out of thy house, nor he goats out of thy folds. For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills."*
>
> PSALM 50:9-10

Your English Bible says hills. The Hebrew says HAREREI ELEPH. Mountains of a thousand.

Mountains, plural, already His. Before a single offering is brought and before a single mandate is preached.

You do not storm a hill that belongs to your own Father. You don't take back what was never lost. The entire logic of conquest assumes contested ground, and I don't start from contested ground. I start from settled ground that I'm walking onto as family.

Now watch what happens to the word dominion after the garden.

Genesis 1:26 is where RADAH starts. The next time it appears, it's Leviticus 25, and it shows up as a restriction instead of a permission. A brother has fallen into poverty and sold himself, and G-d says, "Thou shalt not rule over him with rigour; but shalt fear thy G-d." (Leviticus 25:43)

He says it again in verse 46. He says it a third time in verse 53.

The first appearance of dominion after Eden is a limit on how hard you're allowed to rule.

And the fence isn't a policy. It's a Person. Fear thy G-d. The only safe hands for RADAH are hands that answer to Somebody higher, and the only safe way to rule a brother is to remember whose he already is.

Then there's the word translated rigour. It's PEREK, and it shows up exactly six times in the entire Old Testament. Twice in Exodus 1, describing how Egypt worked Israel. Three times in Leviticus 25, in the fence. Once more in Ezekiel 34, in a verdict.

And G-d tells you straight out why the fence exists. "For they are my servants, which I brought forth out of the land of Egypt." (Leviticus 25:42)

Don't work your brother the way Egypt worked you.

Ezekiel is where somebody jumped the fence. G-d is indicting Israel's shepherds. "The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick... but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them." (Ezekiel 34:4)

Same verb, RADAH. Same word for cruelty, PEREK. Ezekiel is not just reusing Moses' vocabulary. He is quoting the fence back to the men who tore it down. Rule your brother with PEREK and you haven't broken a statute. You've rebuilt Egypt and cast yourself as Pharaoh.

There's a third witness people skip. Psalm 72 is a prayer for a king, and it asks that his rule run "from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth" (Psalm 72:8). That sounds like conquest right up until you read what the psalm says the rule is for. "He shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor." (Psalm 72:4)

Three witnesses, then. Leviticus builds the fence. Ezekiel prosecutes the men who jumped it. Psalm 72 prays for the kind of king who never needed one.

Dominion in scripture is a shepherd's word. Real authority, real responsibility, aimed at feeding the flock instead of fleecing it.

And here's the part that reframes everything. The dominion grant is not earned. It isn't won in a trial or taken in a fight. It's handed over in the same breath as the image. "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion." (Genesis 1:26)

Luke's genealogy walks all the way back and calls the first man what he was. Adam, "which was the son of G-d." (Luke 3:38)

The first dominion mandate in all of scripture is a sonship grant, not a battle plan. A son told to tend ground that already belonged to his Father.

Now the strongest objection, because I'd rather raise it than have you find it later.

> *"The L-rd shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies."*
>
> PSALM 110:2

RADAH again, and this time enemies are right there in the verse. So doesn't that settle it for conquest?

Read the psalm whole and it lands the other way.

Verse 1 already assigned the enemies to somebody. "Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." The Son sits. The Father makes. That job was never handed to us.

Verse 2 is not a campaign to capture hostile ground. It's authority exercised in the middle of hostile ground, before it's been cleared, by Someone who doesn't need it cleared first.

Verse 3 says His people are willing in the day of His power. The Hebrew there is NEDAVOT, the word for freewill offerings. Volunteers, not conscripts.

And when Paul reaches for this psalm, he tells you who's actually on the enemy list. "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." (1 Corinthians 15:26)

Not a people group. Not a political party. Not an institution or a school board or a network. A power.

Psalm 110 turns out to be the clearest picture in scripture of a Son ruling on contested ground without ever treating the people standing on it as the enemy.

So what does everywhere actually mean?

Before I tell you what I'm leaving, let me be fair about what I'm not, because this history is younger than most people assume.

The idea that faith belongs in all seven of those places did not start as a battle plan. It started in 1975, with two men who landed on the same list of spheres and were thinking about where people actually live... about getting the gospel out of the building and into the places where somebody spends a Tuesday. There is no conquest text anywhere in that original version.

The mountain language came a generation later, and somewhere in that same stretch a posture came with it. Occupy the top. Hold the high ground or lose the culture. Get there before somebody hostile does.

That posture is what I'm arguing with. Not the image, and not every man who uses it. Plenty of them are closer to what I'm about to describe than an argument like this usually admits, and I'd rather say that out loud than win a point off a brother.

So let me be exact about what I'm refusing, because it's one thing and not a category. Not the seven spheres. I hold those, and they're most of why this book exists. Not the mountain as a picture. Just the grafted idea that the way a son takes ground is by capturing it.

I'm keeping the mountains. I'm even keeping the word takeover. I'm changing what it means.

That posture treats the seven spheres as enemy-held territory to be captured, politically if necessary, because if you don't hold it somebody hostile will. A conquest map has occupants to drive out.

Mine has neighbors to feed.

I treat those same seven spheres as ground that already belongs to my Father, that I get to walk as a son doing good. The way leaven works through the whole lump without conquering the flour. "The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened." (Matthew 13:33) The way salt changes meat from the inside without ever controlling the animal. "Ye are the salt of the earth." (Matthew 5:13)

Leaven doesn't win a vote. It just gets in, and then there's no part of the loaf it didn't reach.

That's what everywhere means in Do Good, Everywhere, Always. Not take control, everywhere, always. Nobody is asking you to capture your workplace. You're being asked to be salt in it long enough that people can taste the difference and can't tell you exactly when it started.

We don't take the mountains. We do good on them, until the whole mountain tastes like salt.

Next chapter is the posture toward people. If you're not going to take the mountain by force, you need to know what you actually do with the ones standing on it, and scripture names a mechanism for changing a human heart that most of us have never taken seriously as a strategy.

DO THIS

Name the mountain you're already standing on. Not the one you wish you had. The actual one. Your shop. Your school. Your department. Your street. Your family table.

Today, on that mountain, do one good thing for the person who can do the least for you. The one with no authority, no budget, no vote, and no ability to advance you one inch.

Do it where it earns you nothing, and make sure it gains you no ground.

That's not you losing the mountain. That's what a son looks like on land his Father already owns.

SEVEN

The Kindness That Turns a Man

If you're not going to take the mountain by force, you had better know what actually changes a person, because something has to.

Scripture names it. We quote the verse constantly and almost always miss the word.

> *"Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of G-d leadeth thee to repentance?"*
>
> ROMANS 2:4

Your King James says goodness twice in that verse, and Paul used two forms of one word to do it. The riches of his goodness is CHRESTOTES. The goodness that leadeth thee to repentance is CHRESTOS. Same root, and the root is the kindness word. It's the same family as CHRESTOTES in Titus 3:4, and it's the same word the King James renders gentleness in the fruit of the Spirit. (Galatians 5:22)

The English hides it. The Greek says it outright.

Kindness is what leads a man to repentance.

Not fear. Not pressure. Not shame, not argument, not leverage, not a majority on the school board. Paul is not making a suggestion about tone. He is naming the mechanism, the actual working part, the thing that turns a human heart around.

And he isn't the only one. "But after that the kindness and love of G-d our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us." (Titus 3:4-5)

Kindness appeared. Then people got saved. That's the order, and it's the same order we've been tracking since chapter three. The kindness came first and it came toward people who had nothing to bring.

So toward people, the posture is kindness. Full stop.

That is not softness. Understand me here, because this gets heard as weakness by men who confuse volume with strength. Kindness is not what you do because you can't fight. Kindness is the weapon. It is the thing scripture says actually works, and most of the church has been reaching past it for a hundred years trying to find something with more horsepower.

Now, kindness toward people does not mean there is no fight. It means the fight is aimed correctly.

> *"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."*
>
> EPHESIANS 6:12

Paul says it again from another angle. "(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through G-d to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of G-d." (2 Corinthians 10:4-5)

That word imaginations is LOGISMOS. Reasonings. Arguments. Thought-systems. Ideas with buildings and budgets behind them.

Read both texts and see what is never on the target list. A person. Not once. Paul names powers, rulers of darkness, spiritual wickedness, strongholds, reasonings. He never names a neighbor.

So there is a war. I believe that completely, and I've spent years of my life in it. But the enemy has never been the man standing in front of you, and the day you forget that is the day you start doing damage in the name of G-d and calling it boldness.

This is the whole difference between what I'm building and the posture I'm departing from. That contention is carnal and its targets are institutions and the people running them. Mine is aimed only at the ideology running through a place, never at the people standing in it.

Jesus modeled both in the same breath, in the same chapter, in the same speech.

He called the Pharisees a generation of vipers. He did not soften it, He did not apologize for it, and He said it in public. And then, a few verses later, in that same speech, He looked at the city those men ran and said, "O

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" (Matthew 23:37)

Sharp at the hypocrisy. Grieved over the people carrying it.

Both true in the same moment, and there's no contradiction in it, because they were never aimed at the same target. He went after the system with everything He had and He wept over the people standing inside it.

Most of us have that exactly backwards. We're gentle with the ideology because confronting it costs something socially, and we're brutal with the people because they're standing right there and they're easier to hit.

Here's what this looks like on a Tuesday, since this book is not a theory.

The co-worker whose politics make your jaw tight. The relative who said the thing at Thanksgiving. The person online you've already filed under lost cause. The neighbor whose life is a slow-motion wreck that you've privately decided he earned.

You have a position on every one of them. Fine. Hold it.

Now do them good anyway, with nothing attached to it.

That's the test, and it's harder than the argument. Anybody can win an argument. Almost nobody can do a real kindness for someone whose position they despise without slipping one small piece of correction into it, because the correction is how we keep our dignity while being kind.

Take the correction out. That's the whole assignment.

And now the guardrail, because this chapter has a ditch on the other side and I've seen good people drive into it.

Read Romans 2:4 one more time and hear what it actually says. It does not say the kindness of G-d is the point. It says the kindness of G-d leadeth thee to repentance.

Repentance is the destination. It's in Paul's own sentence. And the verse immediately after it is not warm at all. "But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of G-d." (Romans 2:5)

So kindness is the mechanism, and repentance is the aim.

Which means a theology of kindness that cannot call anybody to repent has not out-loved the conquest model. It has just stopped talking.

That's a real danger and I want it named. It is entirely possible to take everything I've written in this chapter and turn it into a permission slip for never saying anything true to anyone. You can call that kindness. It

isn't. It's conflict avoidance wearing kindness like a coat, and it leaves people exactly where you found them, which is the one thing actual kindness will never do.

Kindness is not the absence of confrontation. Kindness is what makes confrontation survivable.

Which brings me to the hardest thing in this book, and the place where everything I've just argued gets tested.

Because in the last week of His life, Jesus walked into the temple and turned the tables over.

If my thesis can't survive that afternoon, it isn't worth the paper. So the next chapter goes straight at it.

DO THIS

Pick the person. You already know the name. The one you have a position on, the one you've decided about, the one you'd describe accurately and unkindly if nobody were listening.

This week, do one concrete good for that person. Not a prayer for them. A thing. With your hands or your money or your time.

And attach nothing to it. No correction, no hint, no gentle observation at the end, no verse. Do the good and shut up.

The kindness of G-d leads a man to repentance. Yours won't, if you keep putting a receipt in the bag.

EIGHT

Of All Nations

The one place all of this gets physical is the temple.

Tables on their side. Coins rolling across stone. The seats of the dove sellers turned over. Nobody allowed to carry so much as a vessel across the court. And a Man in the middle of it who did not look even slightly gentle.

> *"And Jesus went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves; And would not suffer that any man should carry any vessel through the temple."*
>
> MARK 11:15-16

I'm not going to explain that away. People try. They soften it into righteous indignation, or they quarantine it as the one exception, the day the rules didn't apply.

I read it the other way. That afternoon is the clearest proof of the rule in the whole book.

Here's why.

Scripture has a pattern that runs from Leviticus all the way into the church age, and it is consistent enough

to build on. Proximity to holiness raises the stakes of violating it. It never lowers them.

Nadab and Abihu offer strange fire in the tabernacle and fire comes out from the L-rd and consumes them. (Leviticus 10:1-2) Uzzah puts out his hand to steady the ark, with what looks to us like good intentions, and G-d smites him there for his error. (2 Samuel 6:6-7) Ananias and Sapphira lie about a piece of property in the middle of a Spirit-filled gathering and fall dead where they stand. (Acts 5:1-10) Paul tells the Corinthians that some of them are sick and some of them have died over how they were treating the L-rd's table. "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep." (1 Corinthians 11:30)

Nobody is comfortable with that list. I'm not. But you can't read scripture honestly and pretend holy ground has ever been the safe place to cut corners. It has always carried a higher consequence, not a lower one.

Which makes that temple courtyard the single most dangerous place on the planet to be running a con.

And they were running one. Mark tells you exactly what Jesus said while it was happening.

> *"Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves."*
>
> MARK 11:17

Of all nations.

Stop on that phrase, because it changes who this story is about.

The selling happened out in the temple's outer court, in and around the great colonnade that ran along its southern edge. Scholars argue about the exact footprint, and a few of them put the vendors in that colonnade rather than out on the open pavement, but the colonnade stood on the same outer platform, and the outer court is the point.

Because that court had a purpose no other part of the complex had.

At its inner edge stood a low stone barrier called the SOREG, and mounted on it were warning notices. Josephus says they were posted in Greek and in Latin. Archaeologists have dug up two of the Greek ones, one whole and one in pieces, and the wording is not subtle. No foreigner passes beyond this point, and whoever is caught has nobody to blame but himself for the death that follows.

So the outer court was the only ground in that entire temple where a foreigner was allowed to stand and pray. One step past that rail was a capital offense, and Rome let the Jews enforce it.

That court was the whole world's square of holy ground. It was the only place the nations could come near.

And that is where they set up the cash registers.

So the tables did not go over to defend G-d's dignity. G-d's dignity was never in danger. They went over

because a religious business had been built on top of the only place an outsider was allowed to pray, and the people it shut out had no voice to complain with.

That force was used on behalf of the excluded.

Which brings me to what that force actually was.

Removing those men by force was not Jesus setting kindness down for ten minutes. It was kindness moving fast enough to matter.

Those men were profiteering on holy ground, standing inside a consequence they had no idea was hanging over them. Everything Leviticus and 2 Samuel and Acts says about what happens on that kind of ground was just as true that day, and not one of them knew it.

Being driven out was the kindest thing available compared to what staying could have cost them.

It was an evacuation.

Even at its most physical, the aim was still their good and not their ruin.

Now let me close the seam, because a careful reader has been holding a question for two chapters and deserves an answer.

Last chapter I said kindness is the mechanism and fear is not. This chapter is full of judgment texts. Uzzah, strange fire, people dropping dead in a church service. Doesn't that undercut everything?

No, and here's the distinction that resolves it.

Fear as a mechanism is a tool you pick up to move somebody. Consequence is a fact about how the world is

built, whether anybody uses it or not.

Jesus did not use fear on those men. He never threatened them. He didn't preach the list. He removed them from the path of something that was already coming toward them, because they were standing in it and could not see it.

That's the difference between a preacher who works a crowd with hell and a father who yanks his son out of the road. One is using fear. The other is responding to a truck.

Kindness stays the mechanism. Consequence stays real. Anybody who tells you a G-d of love means a world without consequence has never read Acts 5 and has never raised a child.

One more thing before the act, and this is the part that lands on people like me.

Look at where He used force, and where He never did.

He never used it on the woman at the well. Never on Zacchaeus, who had actually stolen from people. Never on the woman caught in the act and dragged into the street. Never on Rome, and Rome was occupying His country. Never on a single sinner anywhere in the Gospels.

He used it in one place. Inside His Father's house. Against a religious enterprise making money off the people it was supposed to serve.

So if you find yourself reaching to turn something over, check the address first.

The impulse to swing at the culture, the party, the school, the neighbors, the people on the other side of your feed... that impulse has no precedent in the story. He never once turned it outward. The only thing He ever cleared by force was the house with His Father's name on it.

Which means that kind of force is not a tool you take out into the mountains. It's a tool for your own house, used by somebody who actually owns it, aimed at whatever got built on top of the ground that was supposed to be open.

That's the last of the posture. Kindness toward every person standing on the mountain. Contention only against what's controlling them. Force, when it's ever needed, aimed at rescue and not at ruin.

One chapter left. Always, and the answer to the promise on the cover.

DO THIS

Go look at your own courtyard.

Somewhere in what you run... your ministry, your business, your family, your platform... there is a table sitting on ground that was supposed to be open. Something that used to be free and now has a price on it. A room that used to be for anybody and now takes a relationship to get into. A service you're charging somebody for that you know good and well you should be handing them.

Find that one thing today. Just one.

Turn the table over. Today, not after the quarter closes.

And when you do it, be careful. The poor are always standing closest to the thing you're about to overturn.

NINE

After Many Days

I owe you a fence.

Back in chapter one I said this book carries a promise on the cover, and that the promise needed a fence built around it before anybody got hurt on it. Because good comes back. It's on the shirt. It's in the title. And if I hand you that line without the fence, some of you are going to do good for two years, get nothing, and quietly conclude that G-d is a liar.

So here's the whole thing in one line, and then I'll build it out.

The return is not the reason. It's the residue.

Residue is what's left on the pan. It's what the work leaves behind. Nobody cooks in order to get residue and nobody plants a field in order to get dirt under his nails, but you cannot do the thing without it showing up. It is real, it is not the point, and the moment you make it the point you've stopped doing the thing and started running a transaction.

Now the text that says it better than I just did.

Start with the verse people misuse worse than any other verse in American Christianity.

> *"Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again."*
>
> LUKE 6:38

You've heard that verse read over an offering bucket more times than you can count.

Now read three verses up, in the same paragraph, out of the same mouth.

> *"But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil."*
>
> LUKE 6:35

Do good, hoping for nothing again. And your reward shall be great.

Both. In one sentence. Jesus promises the return and then forbids you to do it for the return, and He does it without pausing, because He does not see a contradiction there.

That is residue, stated by Him, three verses above the verse we stole.

And look at the last line of 35. He is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil. That's CHRESTOS again, the same word from Romans 2:4, the one that leads a man to repentance. G-d does good to people who never say thank you, and He has been doing it a lot longer than

you have.

So let me be exact about what kind of thing a residue is, because four wrong ideas attach themselves to it.

One. It is not karma.

Karma is a machine. You put in, the machine owes you, the machine pays. It has no face, no discretion, and no capacity to know what would destroy you if you actually got it.

This is a Father. A Father is not a machine. A Father gives, and sometimes a Father withholds, and the withholding is not a malfunction. A machine owes you. A Father decides.

If you want a G-d who owes you, you don't want a Father. You want a vending machine with better theology.

Two. It does not come back in kind.

Solomon said you'll find it. He never said you'll find the same loaf. Feed somebody and you may not get fed. You may get a door opened in a city you've never been to, by a person you've never met, twenty years later, for reasons nobody can trace.

If you're standing there with a receipt waiting for matching change, you'll miss the actual return while it's happening.

Three. You don't set the clock.

After many days, Solomon says. Due season, Paul says. Nobody ever says this quarter.

> *"And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."*
>
> GALATIANS 6:9

See what the harvest is conditioned on in that verse. Not the quality of your seed. Not your technique. If we faint not. The one variable Paul names is whether you were still doing it when the season came.

Four. Sometimes it does not come back in your lifetime, and I won't lie to you about that.

Hebrews runs through the great list of the faithful and then says this about all of them.

> *"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth."*
>
> HEBREWS 11:13

Died in faith. Did not receive. That's in the Bible, in the chapter we teach as the hall of fame. And the word he lands on is pilgrims. People passing through, who threw bread into water and never saw the far side of it.

So if you have done good and bled for it, I'm not going to insult you with arithmetic. Some of you gave a man a job and he stole from the register. Some of you took somebody in and they lied about you on the way out. Some of you have fed and given and covered for twenty years and your own house is still hard.

Scripture does not say that didn't happen. Scripture says the water is bigger than your line of sight.

Now let me say what the residue actually looks like, because naming four things it isn't leaves you holding nothing.

Read the verse right after the bread verse. "Give a portion to seven, and also to eight; for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth." (Ecclesiastes 11:2)

Give it to seven. Give it to eight. And the reason he gives is the trouble you can't see coming.

That is not a promise of profit. That's a description of what a life looks like when the hard thing finally arrives. Solomon is telling you to send it out wider than makes sense, precisely because you cannot see what's ahead.

And when it comes, here is what has come back. You are standing in a place where eight people owe you nothing and would come anyway.

Nobody builds that. It accumulates. It's residue, and it grew in a field you forgot you planted.

I kept the boomerang on the logo, and I'll tell you where the picture breaks.

A boomerang returns to the hand that threw it. That's the whole appeal of the image, and it's the part that isn't true. Bread on the water does not come back to your hand. It goes downstream. It feeds somebody you will never meet. What returns to you comes by a different current, on a different day, usually carried by someone who has no idea they're delivering it.

It's a good logo. It's an incomplete theology. Solomon's picture is better, and Solomon's picture requires you to lose sight of the loaf.

Which brings us to the third word.

Always.

Do Good. Everywhere. Always.

Do is a verb you can start. Everywhere is a map you can learn. Always is the one that actually costs, because always means the morning after nothing came back.

> *"In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good."*
>
> ECCLESIASTES 11:6

Two sowings in one day. He does not tell you to check the morning seed before you plant the evening one. He tells you to plant twice and stay ignorant about both.

Always is what separates this from a campaign. Anybody can do good for a season. A season is a program, and programs end, and somebody puts out a report with numbers in it. Always is not a program. Always is what your hands do now, including on the days it produced nothing, including for people who didn't deserve it, including after somebody burned you for it last spring.

He is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil. If you're going to look like your Father, that is the part you're going to look like.

So we're back where we started.

This book cost you nothing. Somebody handed it to you or sent you a link, and you opened it because it was free.

I told you at the beginning to hold onto that, and here's why.

It was bread, and I put it in the water. I have no idea where you're reading this, what city you're in, what your week has been, or what you'll do in the next ten minutes. I let it go. That was the only honest way to write a book that says what this one says.

And now the water is you.

DO THIS. TWO THINGS, AND THE SECOND IS HARDER

First, send it to somebody who would never go looking for it. Text it. Forward it. Put the link in front of someone today. Don't recommend it. Give it.

Second, tomorrow morning, before anything has come back, do it again.

That's the whole thing. That's Do Good, Everywhere, Always, and there is nothing left of it to explain.

Because good comes back. Not as the reason. As the residue.

Cast it anyway.

THAT'S THE BOOK.

Free.
Two lives.
Pass it on.

DO GOOD. EVERYWHERE. ALWAYS.

bread.hlav.org

ALAN BAILEY

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The small group study built on this book is free as well, at bread.hlav.org.

Free.
Two lives.
Pass it on.

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