

"Great Are Your Purposes and Mighty Are Your Deeds"

Dear Friends in Christ Jesus our Lord,

Attached is Saga 13, ***The LORD Directs The Steps Of His Servants***. Once again we're recalling events from our own lives for a specific reason — so you can see how the Holy Spirit graciously used two very imperfect vessels (2Corinthians 4:7) who were discipled to be ***obedience-based to our Lord Jesus***. Our personal understanding of the Holy Spirit's intent in having us write these Sagas is also specific: to share with you the *living reality* of people who aren't hanging their eternal destiny on any of the **divisive creeds and religious practices of scribal theology**.

What we are recounting in these Sagas is the way of life under the Lordship of Jesus that the Bible declares as **true evidence that we belong to Him!** True evidence encompasses a life of love-grounded obedient trust that testifies to the working of the indwelling Holy Spirit ***in and through and around*** you. We realize that these Sagas may seem arrogant to some readers and irrelevant to others. But Paul was permitted in his letters to describe his own spiritual journey, and the Holy Spirit has given us permission through these Sagas to encourage and exhort you in your own way of life in Jesus. Our deep concern and purpose is not only to embolden the Lordship-committed to resolutely press on in loving obedience. We are also expressing our distress over those who see their highest spiritual expression to be attending services each week. Please prayerfully take up these considerations with the Holy Spirit:

- Is our *obedience-based way of life* which we relate in these Sagas (and we don't mean merely the particular details of how He orchestrated each scenario and how it played out) just one of many spiritual paths our Lord approves?
- Or, does the Holy Spirit bear witness through these Sagas to *loving obedience* revealing the only reality of Jesus being LORD of someone who says they're a Christian?
- Can a Christian authentically claim to have faith in Jesus ***if*** they don't have even one testimony to our Lord's ***grace with purpose*** flowing through them and producing obedient action (see James 2:17-26; 1John 3:18)?

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God" (Matthew 5:9).

Have you ever had a Christmas in which Christ would feel completely welcomed and honored in your home? It's important to recognize that the observance of Christmas has pagan origins and practices which were incorporated into the celebration by religious leaders whose aim was to attract and appease pagan "believers". You may have noticed that Christ-less traditions and blatant materialism have erased any reference to the first coming of Jesus in the public arena. Maybe in your own home He is given lip service with a colorful little nativity set that's hidden among the tree and presents and glittering decor. But **would the Lord Jesus, Himself, feel welcomed at your gathering?**

If you're the head of your household or will be part of a gathering where Christians will be present this holiday, we challenge you with these steps which focus on eternal values rather than on moments of temporary happy feelings:

1. You use the time before you sit down together and eat to testify about our Lord Jesus and how He has used you this past year.
2. You urge each person there who considers themselves a "Christian" to bear witness to how our Lord Jesus was real in their lives during this past year.

3. Next, you ask all those present (including yourself) if any of you have even the slightest ill-feeling toward anyone, especially someone who is present in the room. (Keep in mind that every person against whom you or someone else holds resentment or irritation or frustration is an individual for whom our Lord Jesus shed His blood.)
4. Please don't just smile and go on with the meal until you have had each person who has been carrying ill-feelings has asked our Lord Jesus's forgiveness for their attitude (Matthew 6:14,15).
5. And if one of the people they have held ill-feelings against is present, you don't go on until they ask that person's forgiveness (Matthew 5:23,24). (Just apologizing or saying "Sorry" is arrogant insincerity — it's coming from the lips but not from the heart.)
6. When each person who needed to has asked forgiveness, you don't go on until forgiveness has been given by the offended individual (Matthew 18:34,35).

Do you have the loving courage to put Christ in the middle of His own birthday party? If you follow through with this because you so fully appreciate what our Lord Jesus has done for YOU as the Ultimate Peacemaker with our heavenly Father, He will commend you. This very action of you lifting Jesus up and serving as His peacemaker bears witness to Him of your loving and obedient trust in Him! It doesn't matter what pagan-influenced Christianity does in its compromise with the world's ways. It matters the most for YOU to represent Jesus as your Lord and to be His ambassador in drawing others to forgive from the heart even as they want to be forgiven by His Father (2Corinthians 5:18-20)!

Testifying on behalf of the Lord of heaven's armies,
Mike & Sue