

In the World . . .

“And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world . . .” (John 17:11).

Use this news story from recent days to help your students see the relevance of this week’s Sunday school lesson from the Standard Lesson Commentary®/Standard Lesson Quarterly.

RESPONDING TO ONE KIND OF DISASTER

As recovery from Hurricane Sandy stretched into another painful week, many people in other parts of the country heeded the call to assist the storm’s victims. A church in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, sent a semitrailer truck with food, medical supplies, clothes, and other necessities. A woman in Bowling Green, Kentucky, started filling her pickup truck with donations, and the effort soon turned into a community project that filled a semi. An owner of a chain of restaurants in San Diego donated two nights’ proceeds. The list of people and organizations providing help across the country is a long one!

RESPONDING TO ANOTHER KIND OF DISASTER

The residents of tiny Malta were very kind to Paul and his cold, wet companions after their shipwreck—and remember that there were 276 in need of immediate aid (Acts 27:37)! The residents undoubtedly acted with no thought that their hospitality would or could ever be repaid. But repaid it was, in unimaginable fashion as Paul miraculously healed the sick of the island, including the chief official’s father. This resulted in hearts willing to hear the gospel. The greatest disaster on the island of Malta that day was the spiritual disaster of sin. The gospel of Jesus was the remedy Paul brought; it is the remedy we bring yet today.

1. What causes people who live a great distance from a disaster to make the effort to help the victims?
2. How do Christians compare with nonbelievers in responding to humanitarian needs?
3. How do we make sure that our helping opportunities involve witness for Jesus?
4. When was a time that you saw the message of the gospel spread as a result of Christian response to a humanitarian crisis?
5. Should Christians offer help only when there is a high probability that such help will advance the cause of Christ? Why, or why not?
6. How does Galatians 6:10 speak, if at all, to relative priorities of extending humanitarian aid to fellow believers in relation to unbelievers?

—Charles R. Boatman

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