

“*Don’t force religion!*”, they shout! But what they don’t realize is that no one has ever in the history of the world become a Christian by force. It’s as if they want us to feed the world apples but never tell them about how to grow their own apple trees. “*Don’t force agriculture down people’s throats!*” Just as there is a necessary connection between apples and apple trees, so there is a necessary connection between freedom and the Gospel as presented in the Bible. That freedom is the fruit of hearing and heeding the word of God.

Of course, people will protest, “*that isn’t true!*” all while demanding to tell you how to run your actual, demonstrably working, freedom producing organization... from the comfort of their couch. They will tell you all about the initiatives they’ve devised in their organization (which is entirely funded from money taken by force from the taxpayer). “See, we *don’t need Jesus to do good!*” they exclaim. Unfortunately, the majority of what they produce with their tax-funded initiatives are individuals forever dependent on more funds taken from the taxpayer. In other words, their theft only produces more thieves, and what America and Oregon needs to hear right now is “**Thou shall not steal.**”¹ True charity, a middle English word for love, cannot be bought with stolen money.

How ironic is it that those who decry the use of force want so desperately to demand tax dollars to fund their experimental programs? “*Look at all the good we do with government grants!*” Where do you think government money comes from?!? It comes from our taxes!!! Try not paying your income or property taxes for a couple of years and see how fast the government comes and takes both your income and your property and then throws you in prison. Pretty forceful if you ask me. If I could hack into your bank account and take the money you’ve earned but leave you a note telling you all the people I intend to help (after I pay myself a substantial administration fee of course), would you feel good? “*Wow Martha, it looks like our savings account has been robbed and 30% of our money is gone... oh but look at this nice note the thief left! He promises to use some of it for that confused little boy up the street. That’s nice!*”

The secret to the success of the Gospel Rescue Mission is really simple, hear Gods words and obey them and He will bless your life. Nothing else will do, and this is no “prosperity gospel”. It works for the same reason that obeying the manufacturer of your vehicle regarding the care and maintenance of your car results in a great running car. The creator explains to the creation how it was made and for what purpose. Use it appropriately and everyone will be blessed.

In a 2017 study done by Baylor University² “Assessing the Faith-Based Response to Homelessness in America: Findings from Eleven Cities”, Byron Johnson examines the comparative impact of government vs faith-based programs on nearly 20,000 individuals in 11 major US cities, including Portland. **Their findings uncover the extreme benefits to private, faith-based programs over state funded agencies which then boasted a \$9.42 taxpayer savings per every \$1 of government funding.** These findings, along with long abandoned “Ten-Year Plans to End Homelessness” produced by every county in Oregon circa 2010-2012, which proved only to increase homelessness and employ the same talking points in these bills regarding government funds and oversite towards low-income housing as seen today, serve to demonstrate why government needs to stay out of “solving” homelessness entirely. In my 15 years of experience the state of Oregon overpromises only to get the opposite result, more homelessness, at a staggering cost to their citizens.

Jesus could have easily said, “You can sum up what I’m trying to tell you by simply giving away free things to poor people.” That’s not what He said, and He certainly didn’t suggest stealing from our neighbors. He told us to tell, teach, and disciple people about Himself and His teachings. That is the starting point for everything we do. You don’t have to be a Christian to benefit from us, but your life, neighborhood, county and state will be better because we are here.

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¹ Exodus 20:15

² <https://news.web.baylor.edu/news/story/2017/faith-based-organizations-shoulder-majority-crucial-services-and-develop-creative>