

A Village Plays Salvation – A Commitment Fulfilled

Every 10 years the village of Oberammergau, Germany, puts on a summer season of the Passion Play. The production is a fulfillment of a pledge made by this community in 1633, nearly 380 years ago. At the time of the pledge, the plague that had been killing millions in Europe was threatening the village of Oberammergau. In Medieval times there was no cure for this highly contagious disease: contracting it was a death sentence. The community promised God that if He would spare their village they would portray the “Passion, Death and Resurrection of our Lord, Jesus Christ” to the world. The first production was held in 1634, and is currently offered to a world-wide audience every 10 years. The show is a live re-enactment of the events of Holy Week, starting with Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday and concluding with the resurrection.



So how did the pledge work out? God has protected the village. No one from the community has succumbed to the Black Death. During the two world wars, the community was never hit by bombing raids that destroyed much of Germany.

What is remarkable is the commitment of the *entire community* to uphold a pledge made by their village centuries ago. Of the 5,000 current town residents, half are involved in the show, with 2,000 performing as actors, singers and musicians in the orchestra. Other townspeople work behind the scenes. No one is brought in from the outside to assist this production. Even the woodcarver from whom we purchased souvenirs was due at the theatre 30 minutes after we visited his shop, and we saw him on stage. It was an unbelievably high quality production.

In Oberammergau, *everyday people* were upholding a promise to God. We know God upholds His promise to us. God saw a community come together in faith and commit themselves to share the Good News with others. As a result, the village remains healthy and is thriving today.

Now look at your community and your role in keeping it healthy and thriving. Is there a unity of purpose in your community – perhaps a goal of being a wholesome, family community? We don’t need to be threatened by a devastating health crisis to pledge to God that we will share his message with others. We can do that because Jesus wanted us to spread the Good News to people of all nations. Make a commitment to God that you will do your part to strengthen your community as a community of faith. Ask someone to go to church and encourage others to grow in their faith. Just as the village of Oberammergau found, there are roles everyone in the community can play. And God will reward the effort.

Scripture: *He always stands by his covenant—the commitment he made to a thousand generations (Psalm 105:8).*

Question: How can you play a role in your community so that it will be known as a wholesome, family community that reflects Christian values?

Prayer: Dear Lord, we commit ourselves to do our part to make our community a wholesome community, sharing God’s Word with others. Amen.