

Serving Others

Discipleship 201 - Session #9

And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." Matthew 28:18-20

Introduction: Christ calls us to serve our neighbor in both word and deed. However, Christ's definition of neighbor is not limited to the small circle of people we call our friends and family, and those with whom we are comfortable. Anyone who is in need is our neighbor.

Who is my Neighbor?

- A. Cain asked God, "Am I my brother's keeper?" **YES**
- B. Jonah was upset with God for including the **Gentiles** in God's mercy (Jonah 3:1-4)
- C. Jesus says that neighbors are not only those we like, nor only those that look like us. Neighbors are not defined by kinship but by **need**

How do I become a neighbor? (Luke 10:30-37)

- A. Identify those who are **suffereing** (vs. 30)
This neighbor was stripped, beaten, abandoned
He was also an **enemy**
- B. We cannot be **indifferent** (vs. 31,32)
- C. Express **compassion** (vs. 33)
 - 1. This is not **sympathy**, which feels bad but does nothing.
 - 2. This is **empathy**, which identifies with the sufferer, and intercedes on their behalf
- D. Be willing to **sacrifice** (vs. 34, 35)
 - 1. We are called to give of our:
time, money, love
 - 2. We want to define who is a neighbor so we can limit our **liability**. Yet, Jesus reversed the question: It is not "*Who is my neighbor; but, am I being a neighbor to those in need?*"

What does Jesus call me to do?

- A. We are called to serve our neighbor by **Word** and **Deed**
 - 1. People's needs are both physical and **Spiritual**
 - 2. Actions do speak louder than words when it comes to addressing one's physical needs; however, we can never address one's spiritual needs without **Words**.

But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him? And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful

are the feet of those who bring good news!" ...So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ. Romans 10:14-17

B. Overcome our own objections and **barriers**

1. Fear of **rejection**

Fear will paralyze us into **inaction**

We can't worry about what others **think**

We will be rejected, but don't stop **servicing**

Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness on the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love. I John 4:17-18

2. We can be **lazy** and **unwilling**

3. We can be **judgemental**

We excuse our inactivity by saying, "But they smoke, drink, take drugs, live promiscuously, won't care, aren't like us, etc."

We forget that Jesus ate with sinners and drunkards and prostitutes (Luke 15:2)

We forget how much we have been **forgiven**

Jesus said, "Therefore, I tell you, her sins, which were many, have been forgiven; hence she has shown great love. But the one to whom little is forgiven, loves little." Luke 7:47

What is the difference between poor and rich?

Money: both are impoverished spiritually
Money often glosses over one's spiritual impoverishment

4. We think that faith is a **private** matter

The word "GO" appears:

1514 times in the Bible, **233** times in the New Testament, and **54** times in Matthew

People are hungry and want to **hear**

Those who receive **good** news want to share

How do I serve my “neighbor” by word and deed?

- A. Evaluate how I have invested my **time** and **financial** resources: Do my investments reflect the priority to “Go” and win the lost for Christ; or, are my investments centered around me?

"You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot. "You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven. Matthew 5:13-16

B. Plant **seeds** of faith

1. Pray for God to show you one of God’s sheep who is lost.
2. **Plan** to spend time with this person
3. Express true **friendship**
4. Show your **commitment**
Address their physical and spiritual needs
5. Don’t be **insensitive**
6. Be **patient**: it may take a long time
People are often not a Christian for a reason:
 - they have been **hurt**
 - they have **questions**
 - they are afraid of the **commitment**
7. Express your faith **naturally**
Paul’s example: (Acts 26:9-23)
 - What He was like before **Christ**
 - What it meant for him to meet **Jesus**
 - How his life has **changed** because of JesusTalking about our faith should be as natural as talking about the **Steeler**
8. Invite them to come and **see** (John 1:39)

C. If they want Christ:

1. **Pray** with them, asking for Christ to enter in
2. Connect them with a church that does **discipleship**