

Helping People Shouldn't Hurt

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Date: 21 July 2013

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[0:00] Luke 10, verse 27. I encourage you to think about your lifestyle. I encourage you to think about your lifestyle this past week! And then hold up verse 27 and compare.

Did I love God so passionately that I could describe it as being obsessed?

These words are so familiar to us that I think we tend to assume that the way we're living just matches up. Did I look for ways to help others just as much as I spent time on my own needs?

These are our marching orders. Verse 27. He answered, Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind.

And, love your neighbor as yourself. Obadiah 1.3 warns us, The pride of your heart has deceived you.

[1:21] And so it was with this outstanding person in the community, who is an expert in the law, as he questions Jesus. Well, who is my neighbor anyway?

Starting at verse 30. In reply, Jesus said, A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho when he fell into the hands of robbers.

They stripped him of his clothes, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road.

And when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.

But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was. And when he saw him, he took pity, or compassion on him.

[2:31] He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn, and took care of him.

The next day, he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. Look after him, he said, and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.

Pass by on the other side. Those words can haunt me as I wonder how many times I had an opportunity, but because of selfishness and excuses, it caused me to pass by on the other side.

So Jesus says, I have a quiz for you, Mr. Expert. Which of these three loved his neighbor as himself? You see, all three thought they did when they were on their journey that day.

And all three still think they do when this story is being told. Which three, let's see, passed by, passed by, showed great mercy.

[3:58] And so Jesus has a question for each of us. Not how do we think in passing that we match up to that second commandment, our marching orders toward others.

But when was the last time you could give an example in your life of sacrificial love, big or small, to someone less fortunate?

That's the group we're going to be focusing on this morning. How far back do you need to go to think of an example when you gave sacrificial love, might just be a little thing, to someone less fortunate?

in it. Several years ago, Pastor Aaron gave me a book called When Helping Hurts.

And these are a few of the lessons God continues to teach me. Helping hurts when I don't see myself as broken and needy.

[5:22] When I don't see myself as broken and needy. How do you view yourself this morning? Do you see yourself as broken and needy?

I mean, really. And to be brutally honest with yourself, you need to ask this question. Does my prayer life reflect that?

Was there any of this in your prayers this past week? Listen to King David praying. I am poor and needy.

Oh God, you are my help and deliverer. Psalm 40. I am poor and needy. Come quickly and help me, oh God.

Psalm 70. Hear, oh Lord, and answer me. For I am poor and needy.

[6:28] Psalm 86. And by poor, we know he's not referring to financial in a financial sense. What is the first, the very first characteristic of the citizens of Christ's kingdom in the Beatitudes?

They are what? Poor in spirit. He's talking about humility. That's the very opposite of what the world told us this past week.

You need self-confidence. You need a strong dose of self-esteem. Helping hurts when I don't see myself as broken and needy.

Listen to the example he gives of Creekside Community Church. Creekside Community Church decided to reach out to the African American residents of a nearby housing project, which was characterized by high rates of unemployment, domestic violence, drug and alcohol abuse, and teenage pregnancy.

They decided to address this poverty by buying Christmas presents for the children in the housing project. Church members went door to door, singing Christmas carols and delivering wrap toys to the children in each apartment.

[7:58] Unfortunately, after several years, Pastor Johnson noticed that he was struggling to find enough volunteers to deliver the gifts to the housing project.

So at a congregational meeting, he asked the members why their enthusiasm was waning. But it was difficult to get a clear answer.

Finally, one woman spoke up. Pastor, we are tired of trying to help these people out. We have been bringing them things for several years now, but their situation never improves.

They just sit there in the same situation year in and year out. Have you ever noticed that there are no men in the apartments when we deliver the toys? The residents are all unwed mothers who just keep having babies in order to collect bigger and bigger welfare checks.

They don't deserve our help. I think she had the guts to say out loud what you and I often feel.

[9:19] it's that subtle sense of pride, that feeling that we are superior and they are inferior.

But the truth is that the fall is wrecking havoc in all of our lives. We're all broken, just in different ways. The author says this, until we embrace our mutual brokenness, our work with less fortunate people will do more harm than good.

You see, they sense when we come with the attitude of, I got it all together. You need to be like me. But until you reach that level, I'll give you a little benevolence.

And we toss them a few bucks. No. Instead, we need to come alongside. I'm broken.

And I need Jesus to fix me. On a daily basis, I have this ugly war with sin and selfishness and pride.

[10:40] I have to battle with my natural human instinct to always focus on me. But little by little, Jesus is changing me.

And here's how Jesus can help you. But that's going to demand developing relationships. That doesn't happen by just handing them a Christmas present once a year.

Paul Tripp's book, Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands, on ministering to others.

His subtitle is this, People in Need of Change Helping People in Need of Change. And we've got to get that first half right.

I need God to do His changing work in me today. 1 Corinthians chapter 4 verse 7 asks these questions.

[11:50] Who makes you different from them? Those people who are less fortunate? and name one thing that you possess that wasn't given to you by a merciful God.

God. And what does that force me to admit? But by the grace of God that would be me.

But by the grace of God that would be me. I could have been born on the west side of South Bend. and it helps me when I preach the gospel to myself on a regular basis.

And the gospel always starts with the bad news. God was angry with me and I deserve to be in hell right now.

And I need this message tattooed on my heart on a daily basis. better than I deserve.

[12:58] Stand a wretch who Jesus loves. I actually gave you that. I don't think she knew I wore this every day. Let alone would wear it in church.

Number two. Helping hurts when I enable rather than truly love. Helping hurts when I enable rather than truly love.

Boy, I had to wrestle with this one. Proverbs chapter 29 verse 21 says that if a man pampers his servant from youth, he's going to bring grief in the end.

man pampers now that same principle holds true in parent child relationships, doesn't it? Mom, you told Junior three times to clean his room, but now he's outside playing, and you're doing it for him. why? Why, Mom? Easier? Got company coming tonight?

[14 : 19] Need it done better? Because I haven't trained him to do it right? And rather than take the time to discipline him and properly train him, we pamper and spoil them.

And the question is, are we really loving him? Junior's not learning how to work. Helping hurts when I enable rather than truly love.

Listen to the author's experience. I remember going on a spring break mission trip to Mississippi when I was in college.

I will never forget the sick feeling I had as I stood in the ladder painting a house while the young able-bodied men living in the house sat on their front porch and watched.

I did so much harm that day. Yes, the house got painted, but in the process I undermined these people's calling to be servants, stewards of their own time and talents.

[15 : 38] It might have been better if I had stayed home for spring break rather than to have gone and done harm. time. He stresses this point.

Don't do things for people that they can do for themselves. The federal government has made this mistake for decades.

Well-intentioned welfare programs penalize work and create dependence. And it's hurting the very people they're trying to help.

But here's the difficulty. True love is going to cost us. Okay? If we're not going to do that, true love is going to cost us.

True love costs the father his son. True love costs mom precious time to train junior. And so it is with those less fortunate.

[16 : 52] It is so much easier for me to toss money at the problem than to get involved in their lives.

Developing relationship requires time. Sacrificial time. time. And those relationships can be messy. It requires time if you really want to understand them to find out that they didn't have a dad to teach them how to save money.

To teach them table manners. No elbows on the table. Back at 85 degree angle. Stop chewing with your mouth closed.

Stop talking with your mouth full. And actually you find out that they never even sat down for meals together.

[17 : 53] And they never had a mom who patiently and firmly taught them how to work and do chores properly. My mom she would plant this strain of green beans that were very talented at the game of hide and seek.

Have you seen those? It was my job to pick the patch and I'd come in with a bucket half full. Now she's wanting enough for a meal to feed ten.

I'm wanting to hurry up and go across the street and play tennis. And very patiently and sometimes not so patiently she would take me back to the patch check a couple plants find another handful off just a few more plants and make me pick the whole patch over again.

I'm tired it's hot out here. True love is costly and our call is to die daily to our own selfish agenda so that we can be used to promote God's agenda.

When Jesus says I'll give you a picture here's a picture of what truly loving your neighbor looks like on a human level.

[19 : 25] and so he tells us about an opportunity where this good Samaritan had no time to know about in advance. Wow.

That messes with my schedule. My calendar book doesn't do well with those opportunities. He tells he has this guy giving generously out of his own personal finances.

And then finally he gave of his most precious possession his time. He spent a lot of time with this guy if you read the story closely.

So helping hurts when I enable rather than truly love. do we have any questions or comments on those first two points?

Okay. Turn to Matthew 13 for our last point. Matthew chapter 13. And this third point didn't come from the book.

[20:47] But I share it from my own personal experience. As we give ourselves to ministries of mercy or to any ministry for that matter, the ministry of parenting, teaching, discipling, and even just living with your spouse.

Helping hurts when I put my own expectations on the results. When I put my own expectations on the results.

We're going to focus on verses 18 to 23 where Jesus explains his parable of the soils. Now, I'm not going to take time to read it, but you remember, how many soils did Jesus put in this story? How many? Louder? Four soils. Okay. Somebody. What did the soils represent? men's hearts. How they respond to the word of God. Okay, so the soil is the heart. Think before you answer this one.

[22:15] How many soils responded positively to the gospel? How many had a positive response to the gospel?

two, three. We know the first one didn't. Didn't have a chance. Hard ground.

And we see Satan's activity. And I'm sure he's going to be at work here today and across our world, pecking up the seed. The second one is the rocky ground.

And at the end of verse 20, he says, they received the word with joy. So we know we got a positive response there. And even on the thorny ground, he doesn't say it in this section, but back in verse 7, he says, the seed grew up.

There appears to be a positive response from the seed being sown. It grows up. And then, of course, the last soil, the good soil.

[23:27] How many soils responded savingly to the gospel? Only one. Why do you say that?

Fruit. Okay. Only the last one is fruitful. We see at the end of verse 21, the rocky soil.

When trials and persecution comes, he quickly falls away. No lasting fruit there. So we go to the thorny soil, who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth.

Just the busyness of life. Isn't life busy? Just the busyness of life. Choke it. That's why we call it thorny ground. Making it unfruitful.

And Matthew has already told us earlier in his book that you must produce fruit in keeping with repentance. Chapter 3, verse 8.

[24:41] That the fruit of a holy life shows that repentance is genuine. in chapter 7, verse 20, he says, by their fruit, you will recognize them.

Now, from your theology of the scriptures, we know that none of us was born with good soil.

So how does soil become good so that it produces fruit? How does that happen?

What do you know from your theology? Okay. That it must be the work of the Holy Spirit.

God alone can change that heart, right? 1 Corinthians 3, 6, and 7 says, some of us plant the word, the seed.

[25:46] Others of us water it, but only God makes it grow. He says that twice, back to back. Only God makes it grow.

We cannot determine what the results of our ministry will look like, whether that's with those less fortunate, whether that's with your children, whether that's with your mate.

That is the business of a sovereign God. And we don't have the power to change people. Have you figured that out with your spouse?

But the Holy Spirit does. And he does it through his word. so keep giving him the word. Helping hurts when I put my own expectations on the results.

Now, back in our story, the very last verse, verse 23, what do you remember about the soil that produced a crop?

[27:01] Tell me something. one thing about that fruitful soil. Roger. It's a very degree, some 30 fold, sometimes fold.

Some 60. Have you thought about that last phrase? Some yielded 100, some 60, some 30.

30. Now, in a couple chapters, Jesus is going to say in chapter 16, I will build my church. But if he put me in charge of building the church, I would make everyone a hundred bushel Christian.

Wouldn't you? Have you ever wondered why God doesn't? I mean, he's the one who has the power to change.

commenting on verse 23, Matthew Henry says, where there is true grace, yet there are degrees of it.

[28:11] Exactly what Roger said. Where there is true grace, in other words, you will always see fruit where there is true grace, but there will always be degrees, 30, 60, 100.

only our sovereign God has the power to change hearts, and when he does so, it's always to different levels of fruitfulness.

Have you accepted that truth? God didn't put a 30 bushel Christian in your life by accident.

And rather than complain, why are they changing and maturing so slowly? They claim to be a Christian a year ago, and I think they're a Christian, but man, they're still a baby.

Rather than complain, we need to always be asking, what is God wanting to do in my life by placing that person here?

[29:28] He's got work in my life to do. What's he wanting to do? May that be our focus. On the other side of glory, we'll all be 100% sanctified.

But on this side, we need to understand that God has his own timetable. or we'll be frustrated and discouraged when we minister, especially to those who are less fortunate.

And frustrated and discouraged people don't make effective lovers. I just want to make a point of clarification as I close this point.

our goal is always to see the people we're ministering to, whether it's those less fortunate, whether it's our children, whether it's our Sunday school class, our goal is always to see salvation.

That's what we pray to. God says, open your mouth wide and I will fill it. We trust him. We have faith to say, God, we know you can do it. And then once they're saved, our goal is always to disciple toward Christ likeness.

[30:50] But by expectations, when I say it hurts when I put my expectations on the results, by expectations, I'm referring to the timetable.

Pastor Jason shared with us Wednesday night that many of us have family members that we've been praying for for a long time. And it's easy to get frustrated or discouraged.

And if you're directly involved in living with or ministering to those family members or to that person who is less fortunate than you, I found it's very easy for me to say things and do things that are more hurtful than helpful.

Any questions by what I mean by that or comments? Okay.

Well, we come to practical application then. Let's apply this to our lives. three very patient young men came to me a year and a half ago.

[32:16] Bill Miller, Larry Martin, and Mike Hawes. They've been involved in Lakeshore, Mississippi, helping rebuild from the Katrina devastation along with a number of the rest of you.

And they came to me and asked, why can't we do some type of similar ministry here in our communities?

I'm kind of moved like the tortoise. And it scared me, some of the questions and ramifications.

Today, I have no clue of what we're going to do. but this coming January, we have decided as elders and deacons that this will be the last time that we as a church sponsor the trip to Lakeshore. Now, if you want to go on your own, you're more than welcome to. But we will no longer sponsor it after this January. So get on board if you want your expenses paid this January.

[33:34] Bill, do we still have a sign-up list or see you if you're interested. The sign-up list is still out there. Instead, we want to focus our priority on projects that will have an impact in our communities for the sake of the gospel.

Here's how we need your involvement. Number one, we need you to help us look for opportunities. Contact one of the four of us if you have an idea as to who we can help. Just throw them at us. Okay? Right now, we don't have any, so yours would be the best one. We do want to make our widows and our elderly our primary concern.

But we also want to reach out to those who are less fortunate. And we desperately need you to be our eyes and ears.

[34:43] My bike rarely travels past the five blocks to Bremen Castings and back, okay? Unless my wife's driving north and I happen to be in the car with her.

So we need your eyes and ears to look for opportunities. Number two, please pray for wisdom for this project as we work on this as a church.

As I mentioned, I don't have a clue what I'm doing. I'm thankful for these three men. They have much experience and I'm going to be depending on them.

But when it comes to priorities and how much money do we sink into this and that? A lot of undecided questions, but we got to just jump in and start moving.

So please pray for wisdom as we seek to carry this out. And then lastly, I have a question. Are you willing to help us in this ministry?

[35:52] Young, old, male, female? Let one of the four of us know if you would be interested in giving your time and services.

Now, we're not committing you to 40 hours a week. We're just saying, yes, Dan, if you have something come up, call me. And it'll depend on what the project is.

if you're just interested in giving an hour here or there, get with Bill Miller, Larry Martin, or Mike Hawes, or myself.

Now, I mentioned this a couple months ago, and so far we have two volunteers. volunteers. We need a bigger group than that if this ministry is going to be effective.

So please come to us. Are there any questions on what I'm asking you to do? Because this is new ground. Any suggestions for us that you want to make now to help us go in the right direction?

[37:10] Comment? comments. Is anybody awake? Roger. Thank you. How far are we going to travel? Okay, how far are we going to travel? We had a team that went to Ohio the other day.

We will only ask you to travel as far as you want to travel. Bless those men that were willing to go all the way to Ohio to help a situation.

A lot of it's going to depend on what we decide. We would like to keep it as local as possible, but if we don't find anything else, and there's another project in Ohio, I think it's good for us.

How good was that trip for you, Larry? Why? Why do you say excellent? You took me out of my neighborhood. you get to meet a lot of new people, and yet the Lord blesses everybody out of the way.

Okay. Good. hard. You get to know your brothers. Hmm. You work with them all in the world. You get to know them in the world.

[38:26] Okay. That's their heart. So yeah, how far, we don't know. We'd like these to be local projects, but, and that's the reason we're going to pull our support since we've been giving it for how many years to Lake Shore.

But, if we don't get anything locally, we want to seek to be ministering to people who are less fortunate.

I think you can't read your Bible without God requiring that of us. And, good question. But we will not force you. We just need willingness, and out of that list, I can come to you and feel free to decline.

when we present the opportunity. Karen. When you say, look for opportunities, you're looking for just instruction opportunities, or can you kind of share more of the life of the people?

That's an excellent question as well. Rhonda Miller has had a team of women that are trying to help in house cleaning opportunities and that type.

[39:44] We'll take that. We'll take anything that would be considered helping. Okay? And especially to those who are widows, elderly, or less fortunate.

Okay? And we'll take anything. Now, if we get 15 opportunities today, it's the Richard's neighbor here, it's Christine's neighbor over there, and I've got four more over in Warsaw, then we're going to have to prioritize, and I'll get with the men and say, which one do we want to put at the top, and where do we go from here?

So, but right now, it's not crowded. So, and those are the things that scare me. Okay? What if I get eight at once, or three at once?

Am I going to offend, man, if I offend Rick Fish, he'll never forgive me if I, he wants his barn rebuilt, or, and we go to somebody else first, and he says, well, I've only got two weeks, and we're just going to have to deal with that, but that's why I'm thankful for these three brothers that are willing to give me guidance.

Any other questions? Bill? Good. Good.

[41:16] I was going to ask you, but I didn't want to take you out of your comfort zone. That's good. Larry? Larry? We work with the Mississippi. I had to think, you know, we kind of concentrate on people that have, construction talents, but as we worked with them people, I mean, they were anesthesiologists, a weatherman, a vegetable farmer, and they were people that have a job, but they are willing to work and help, and so don't think you have to have a degree in construction to be

helpful.

Good. Good. Okay. Well, we've been shown incredible mercy. Are we not obligated to show mercy to others?

May God be glorified. You're dismissed. Thank you.