

The World in Need - The Church in Need! (Part 2)

Introduction:

1. Last week we saw some startling statistics about churches in America.
 - Over 3,700 churches per year are closing their doors in America.
 - Over 50% of all Protestant churches will have fewer than 75 people in worship on Sunday.
 - Only 21% of Americans attend church each week.
 - It is estimated that 53,000 people leave churches each week and never go back.
2. What is the problem? The church has lost sight of the world outside its walls. We have become “churches for us” instead of “churches for others.”
 - (Cartoon depicting unfriendly church) Their attitude is, “We don't want outsiders coming in here and messing up the good thing we've got going.”
3. But we must look to our Savior, the risen Head of the body of Christ, and we must see His heart and His attitude towards others. Let's look at Matthew 15:29-31.
 - What love our Savior had for people. He was a Savior for “*others*.”
 - Did you notice in verse 30 that it said that “*many others*” came to Jesus? The word “*others*” literally means “different.” It is also translated “*strange*” in other places.
 - Notice again in verse 32 that Christ is not self-consumed, but focused on others.
4. As we look at the world today, there is no doubt that the world is in great need. Satan is the “god of this world” and has implemented a policy of evil on this earth that is designed to keep people in darkness, sin, and wickedness.
5. But the church is also in great need. Our greatest need is to be moved with compassion and to **care** about the people that are ensnared in Satan's world system.
6. Until we care, there is no hope. We are Christ's ambassadors and the hope of glory lives in us! Colossians 1:27-28 (Notice our commission.)
7. Why did people come to Jesus? Why do people attend a church? Why should we become a church for others? Let's look at the second reason tonight.

Second, because it is a mark of Christ-like love

1. As we look at Matthew 15:29-31 we ask the question, “Why did these people come to Jesus?” What is it that motivated them to seek Christ?
 - I think the text is abundantly clear. It is because they had needs—genuine needs—serious problems, and sobering issues that they were dealing with.
 - They needed help and thought they could get that help if they went to Jesus.
2. Let's seek to apply this principle personally. Why do people come to church—our church?

- What would motivate people to get up, get dressed on a Sunday morning, drive to a place they have never been, and walk into a place filled with people they don't know?
 - They come to church for the same reason that these people went to Jesus. They have genuine needs and they are thinking that they can get the help they need at church.
3. But here is the sad part. So often, people don't find the same love and compassion at church that these people did at the feet of Jesus.
 4. Instead of being a church for others, the prevailing attitude is, "We've built a church for us!" Here at CrossRoads our desire should be to be like Christ and be a church for others.
 5. Let me ask our members a question. Do we care that there are people in our midst every Sunday that are grief-stricken, lonely, confused, mentally disturbed, on the brink of suicide, terminally ill, have open wounds from a recent divorce, physically disabled, etc.?
 - You also rub shoulders with these same people at work, in your neighborhood, in your college class, at the gym, on the ball team, at the grocery store, etc.
 - Does it occur to you to try to find people with needs and represent Christ to them?
 6. Even on Sunday mornings, when we have supposedly set aside time for the Lord, the average church member is too busy to be concerned with hurting and needy people. We are too busy worrying about real important things like:
 - Is the choir going to be any good today?
 - Will the preacher be entertaining and minister to me today?
 - Am I going to be able to get my favorite seat?
 - Are they going to sing songs that I like and know?
 - Is the temperature of the church going to be where I like it?
 - Is the invitation going to be short so I can get to lunch before the crowds?
 7. We worry about really important things like the Pharisees (Matthew 15:1-2).
 - Meanwhile people around us are perishing in their sin and being swallowed up with the issues of life.
 8. It reminds me of a story in Mark 9:33-37 (read verses 33-34).
 - This is so like our fleshly nature. The disciples are in the midst of front-line ministry with Jesus. vs. 17-18, 20, 25-29
 - Lives are being changed, people impacted, but there are multitudes more that they need to reach. But the disciples get derailed. They get side-tracked with their own agenda. What an "important" issue! "Which of us will be the greatest?"
 9. Let's apply this to the church. People are in need, lives are being changed and we get derailed by petty issues (preacher didn't shake my hand, the L.I.F.E. Group forgot my birthday, we need more paved parking, we need a bigger L.I.F.E. Group room, etc.).
 - In this text, Jesus takes a child (vs. 36-37) and sets him down and says, "Boys, this is what it is all about: others! It is not about you and your position and your agenda. It is all about others."

- We must continue to be a church for others. Why? It is a mark of Christ-like love.
10. I am reminded of the parable Jesus told in Luke 10:30-37.
- Before we are too hard on the priest and Levite, be honest. Haven't we been guilty?
 - We pass right by lonely, hurting, confused people, right here at church every Sunday!
 - We are on our way to sing in the choir, teach a class, work in Junior Church, get to our usher's post, get our kids to class, get to our favorite seat, and get to our car so we can beat the lunch crowd (meet our friends).
 - My prayer is that God will raise up a host of good Samaritans here at CrossRoads, people with hearts for others. It is a mark of Christ-like love. Philippians 2:4-5

In Conclusion:

1. Jesus is no longer physically here on this earth. He indwells those who know Him as Savior and works through them. John 17:26
2. If people are to see the mercy, love, and compassion of Christ, they must see it in you and me.
3. A church for others is a church where Christ-like love abounds in and through its members! John 13:34-35