

GO! #Outside
Luke 10:25-37
June 18, 2017

Too often, the narrative concerning “The Church” has everything to do with what the church does inside the walls. We worship, we celebrate our Lord and the relationship we have with Jesus, we shake hands, we share our resources – the list is pretty long of all the things we do inside the walls of the church. Here’s my challenge CrossPoint – can we make an exhaustive list of services that we offer outside of the church? No, No, No – don’t ask are you doing this individually; ask are we doing this as a church community.

Read the passage: Luke 10:25-37 (NLT)

Jesus tells this story to teach us something about how our love for God is shared and expressed in our lives. I would argue, if our faith isn’t evident in every aspect of our lives, and especially when it comes to helping and blessing others, then our faith is void and useless. James, the brother of Jesus, once said that faith by itself is, in effect, a dead faith. He further states that faith is seen by other in the good we do...for those that have repented and accepted Christ, good deeds are the evidence of our faith

The conversation in verses 2-28 is between two individuals that were very educated and astute when it came to The Law, the Scriptures. The lawyer was trained in interpretation and application of the The Law, and Jesus is, in fact, the originator of The Law. The lawyer comes to Jesus with two interesting questions, and two interesting motives behind these questions. First, he asked Jesus: what did he have to do to inherit eternal life? His motive was to find out the requirements for eternal life. Jesus answered by pointing him back to “The Law”. Take a moment and notice what Jesus didn’t point to: He didn’t point him to the religious governing body, He didn’t point him to the culture or the popular opinion of that time, He didn’t mention the Jerusalem Gazette magazine, or even Galilee Theological Seminary– He pointed the lawyer to the authority – The Law.

The lawyer immediately knew how to respond to Jesus’ reply – He knew that the duty of humanity was to love God with everything, and then love one’s neighbor in the same way, that we love ourselves. Jesus responded again, and affirmed his answer. But then, the lawyer took the conversation a step forward and asked the daring question, he asked the question that identified his second motive – the lawyer wanted to justify his religious piety, but ignore his godly sense of duty and service. He asked, “Who is my neighbor”. You know – there is something to be said about motives. It boggles my mind how we as church people, those who name the name of Christ, those that fold hands and bow their heads before eating and sleeping, those that preach, sing, and greet – how we make excuses for NOT helping and walking with people that are suffering from the margins of life.

We turn our GO into NO when we make excuses. Let me be completely honest and straight-forward – faithful church attendance, singing and preaching, administering money and programs, small groups and Bible studies cannot complete a personal relationship with God. They are all good things but, a personal and intimate relationship with God starts with faith, is expressed in love and results in service.

Love is expressed in actions.

Now, in the fear that we might do things for the wrong reasons, Jesus tells this story that gets to the heart of the motivation behind the lawyer’s question about who his neighbor is. Jesus wants to make sure this young man and all of us know that reaching out beyond these walls is about loving Jesus...not checking things off a list or doing good hoping that it will secure a place for us in heaven. That will always leave us needed to do more. So, if our motivations don’t flow from an extension of our love and adoration for God – you will eventually burn out, grow bitter, and probably quit. And Friends, we cannot let that happen: you want to know why? Because Jesus needs you and me to help change the world we live in.

This lawyer, wanted to justify either his position and in doing so – it opened the door for Jesus to tell him, and us, how true believers and those who desire eternal life can make eternal impacts for the Kingdom of God. Jesus, as Warren Wiersbe comments “...moved (the conversation) from duty to love, from debating to doing.” We must be willing, ready and determined to go OUTSIDE! It is not enough to say that we love God, but to refuse, or procrastinate, or make excuses, or reason ourselves away from – Going OUTSIDE and showing our love to a fallen world is sinful. So, Jesus tells the lawyer a story, one that is full of scandal.

(v.30-32) There was a man who was traveling on a long, curvy, and somewhat dangerous stretch of road. This road was known for the criminals that hung out in the crevasses of the road, so that they could rob travelers. This man on his way to Jericho, was met by a group of robbers – they beat the man, stripped him of his clothes, and left the man for dead. The robbers saw this as – a victim to exploit. The man’s lying on the side of the road: he’s alone, hurt, vulnerable, and in need of medical attention and care. Interesting enough: a priest, someone that works at the Temple and teaches the law, comes by but decides not to stop, but rather, to cross the street and keep moving. If that’s not enough – a Levite, another Temple worker who helps the priest perform their temple rituals, follows the same example of the priest. These two men see this man as an inconvenience to avoid. Here’s my point: we expect unbelievers, or people that are not in right relationship with God through Jesus Christ to be robbers and thieves, and people that exploit others. And we also expect people that are selfish, self-centered, and unbothered by the hurts and misfortunes of others to see this man as an inconvenience to avoid. But, it’s not what we expect from people of faith. Jesus is saying that if we are not careful – we will go to church every week, sing in the choir, participate in hospitality, volunteer at the food pantry, serve on church counsel, go on mission trips, and still see people suffering on the margins as an inconvenience to avoid. Jesus is telling this story because he wants to know that:

Love makes no excuses.

(Look at verse 33-35) And then the story takes a turn for the ugly. This exchange is full of racial and ethnic tension. Samaritans and Jews, simply put, did NOT get along. They did not fellowship with one another, they didn’t share meals together, they didn’t live in the same communities or shop at the same grocery stores. Their children didn’t go to the same schools and their churches weren’t in the same neighborhoods. They lived very separated lives and shared a mutual feeling of dislike for one another. So, when Jesus mentions a Samaritan helping a Jew, please feel the tension in the text. And please hear me: the point of this story is not to dive into racial tension – but the point of this passage and illustration that Jesus is pointing us to is this:

LIFENOTE: Love overcomes.

Whatever racial, cultural, or socio-economic difference that existed between the Samaritan and the Jew...it was overcome by love. When we love God with everything: our heart, soul, strength and mind – then we can love our neighbor as our self! The one who loved God with everything and neighbor as himself – saw the man as an opportunity to love, help, and show mercy. This compassionate Samaritan goes to the man, takes care of him, placed him on his donkey, took him to a local inn, and then paid for continued care. Being loving cost this man his time and his money. Please note the inevitable reality – When love is expressed in actions, many times that means that it just might be inconvenient.

Love is a sacrifice.

We live in a world that promotes ease, no sweat, no hassle, no commitment, no pressure, just happy go lucky all the time – and the truth is this: if we are going to love those that are suffering we are going to get our hands dirty. This means that will have to get out of our seat of comfortability.

I often ask this question: If you were arrested for being a Christian – would you have enough evidence to book you!?

Is your walk with God marked by compassion, care and sacrifice? Jesus tells the lawyer to go and do the same – and now Jesus is telling us to do the same!

Love goes!

So, what will CrossPoint Church look like if we are to take this passage seriously? Will we just do everything that is comfortable or convenient? We we take the message of Jesus into the world we live in instead of expecting the world to come to us. That’s not our tradition. From John Wesley to Jacob Albright to William Otterbein to Martin Beohm in the 18th and 19th century – what has marked us as believers is that we were willing to leave the comforts of our buildings and go into all the world because love goes! Love doesn’t stand by waiting for people to find it but, love drives men and women like us to go into all the world – into our communities, schools, communities, and those places where the love of Jesus needs to be seen.

So, the question for all of us...will we go!