

## Get Their Name - Serving (#2)

July 29, 2018

Mark 10:45

### **Mark 10:45 New Living Translation (NLT)**

*45 For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many."*

Today we continue our Life Talk series on evangelism called *Get Their Name*. Evangelism is a challenge for most of us to say the least. Statistics remind us that as believers, we have not been regularly sharing our faith with non-believers. The result has been a church that is smaller and, some might say less effective, than it has been in the past. Fewer people than ever have a relationship with Christ and attend church regularly in America. While the church is growing in other parts of the world, there is a sense within our culture that the church is "dying." That is *not* what we want!

So, what are we going to do about it? At CrossPoint, we *want* to be a church known for our love of God and our love of people. We *want* to be a place where disciples grow. We *want* to be a living, vibrant church where it's hard to go to hell from Harrisburg. We *want* to be excited and proud to invite our friends, neighbors, and colleagues to visit. We *want* to be a place where people can come and get answers when they have questions about God and about faith. We *want* to be examples of Christian faith: giving, serving, and welcoming to absolutely everyone. If this is truly what we want, we have to be intentional about it and do things that will make a real difference in people's lives. We ought to serve people where they are in their times of need, build genuine trust with them, and share the gospel in authentic and ethical ways.

- **We want to be intentional and make a difference.**

Last week, we talked about Knowing Your Story: being able to tell people about the goodness of the Lord by what He is doing in our lives right now. We also talked about sharing our story with our small group members. This is a good start, but we cannot stay contained in our own churches and in our own small groups. If we want to change the world for Christ and make it hard to go to hell from Harrisburg, we have to find ways to share our story with people who do not yet know the Lord.

So, how do we do that--share the gospel in a natural, easy, authentic way with people who don't know the Lord? If we're going to do it like Jesus did then, it starts with serving: helping to meet the needs of the people. In the Gospel of John (13:15), after Jesus had served His disciples by washing their feet, He said "I have given you an example to follow. Do as I have done to you." In the Bible, we can see Jesus serving people in miraculous ways: healing the sick of physical conditions like paralysis (Mk 2:1-12) and injury (Lk 22:49-51), providing food for thousands of hungry people more than once (Jn 6:1-14; Mk 8:1-10), and ministering to people who were spiritually bound (Mk 1:21-28, Lk 4:31-37, Lk 11:14-26, Mk 5:1-20).

As believers, our goal should be to model the life of Jesus in our day to day living by serving. Serving starts with meeting the needs of others but, serving *for the sake of the gospel* includes much more than that. [As an article from the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America](#) said, "Jesus calls us to be more than good waitstaff." The truth is, it is easier to just focus on basic needs like food, shelter, or clothing. But, serving in a way that other people meet Jesus includes building relationships, showing the love of God through what we do, and sharing the love of God through our story.

- **Sharing the gospel through service starts with building relationships**
- **Show them the love of God through our actions**
- **Share the love of God by telling your story**

When asked about the greatest of the commandments (Mt 22:36-40), Jesus told people that the love we show for others is just like the love we have for God. There are many examples in Scripture of Jesus building relationships and connections with people while serving them and showing God's care. For example,

- When other people judged and shunned the Samaritan woman at the well, Jesus took time to talk with her about her experiences and the things happening in her life (Jn 4).
- Jesus invited the children to Himself with open arms. He taught adults how valuable and important children were as people. Jesus said that people have to have open hearts and acceptance like children in order to accept and be part of God's kingdom (Lk 18:15-17).

Jesus serves the practical needs and spiritual needs that were both, equally important. The Gospel of Mark (10:45) says, **"For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many."** Jesus served and dedicated His life and love to the people on purpose and with intention.

Jesus did not wait for people to come into the synagogue to learn about God's love, forgiveness, and the power of salvation. Jesus went out and met the needs of the people right where they were. At CrossPoint, we want to reach Harrisburg for the Lord. To do this, we have to go out into the city and the surrounding areas and meet people right where they are. This will take intentional effort, and time. To have an impact, we have to be consistent and stick with it. Evangelism, sharing our stories, and making disciples means building relationships with people, families, and communities one by one. It means sticking it out in the process for an extended period of time.

People may accept our service or "free stuff" in the beginning, but that is just the start. Relationships are built on trust, and people will need to trust us in order to believe anything we share about God and what He is doing in our lives. That may sound crazy but, that's the world we live in today. Think about it: You are sharing the message of the cross with people. The gospel message is wild! A human being was also God. He was born and He also always existed. His mother was a virgin pregnant by God. He grew up with all the power of God, but He allowed Himself to be killed. He rose from the dead and walked around talking to people for over a month. He left Earth by going up in the air. Because He did all of that, God's Spirit is not out there somewhere but, it's inside of everyone who believes. If we listen to the gospel with a non-Christian ear, it sounds like something from The Twilight Zone or Lost in Star Trek! The Apostle Paul (1 Cor 1:18) said that ***the message of the cross is foolishness to people who don't believe.*** We can understand how that might be if we remember a time when we didn't believe or doubted. People who don't know Jesus or anything about Him have to believe a lot in order to hear and believe the gospel message.

So, we bridge that belief gap through service and trust. A great example of serving and trust-building is the account of the Samaritan woman at the well, who we mentioned earlier. Here was a woman who was ostracized in her community. Jesus took the time to interact with her when the rest of the town looked down on her, a woman with some relationship issues. She and Jesus discussed quite a bit about her life and she was shocked that He knew so much about her since He was a stranger. Their relationship was different because He treated her with care, concern, and respect. She believed Him and trusted Him. The Bible says that she went back into the village and shared what Jesus did in her life. She shared her story with others and told them the Good News.

Some people from the village believed her right away and others believe because they had their own, personal, life-changing experience with Jesus. They said, "***We believe now not only because you told us with words but because we have seen and heard Him ourselves, and now we know that He is the Savior of the World***" (John 4:42). We want people to hear the Good News and we want them also to have an experience with the Lord so that they can believe. Believe it or not, there are people who will only know about God, His love and His power if they hear about it from us. And to believe us, they have to trust us. This trust comes from showing up: meeting people where they are, serving them by helping them with their needs, building a relationship with them, seeing them as people and for who they really are.

- **To believe us, they have to trust us.**

So how can we serve and share the gospel? We can look at what people had to do when Jesus sent them out to share the gospel. In Luke 9, Jesus sends out His 12 disciples (Lk 9:1-6), and in Luke 10, He sends His 70+ followers out ahead of Him to share the gospel message (Lk 10:1-16). How did they do it?

- First, both groups had to leave their comfort zones. The Twelve ministered in villages nearby (Lk 9:6) to people who may have heard of Jesus but who had not yet met or seen Him. Jesus told them not to take anything that would give them security or things they could rely on, like a money bag or a walking stick (Lk 9:3). In Luke 10, Jesus sends the 70+ other disciples ahead of Him to get out in front with the message of peace. They were the first “Jesus” that people met along the way.
- Next, Jesus gave them a purpose, which was to serve and to evangelize. Jesus sent both groups out to serve by healing the sick, and to evangelize by telling them about the Kingdom of God (Luke 9:2; 10:9). Serving and evangelism were both part of the assignment.
- Then, Jesus told both groups to build relationship. He said to stay in the houses of others and not to move from house to house while they were in town. We get to know people very well when we are staying with them! It is hard to hide anything when you are in close quarters for an extended period. In modern day, we don't necessarily need to stay at someone's home, but the relationship-building and trust-building purpose of this is clear: go where they are, where they live, learn about them, and help them.

We have everything we need to serve other people, and to share God's love with the world. There are critical needs everywhere we look, and opportunities to share the love of the Lord every day. So, what's holding us back? Is it all the misconceptions about what it means to be a Christian: judgmental, oppressive, out of touch, boring, and weird – is that what's stopping us. We seem hypocritical to our non-Christian neighbors because we are willing to serve and give halfway around the world but less willing to serve halfway around the block. Are we afraid of being embarrassed if we fail? We want people to “be saved” right then and there when we tell them about Jesus! We want people to show up to church on Sunday when we invite them, to stay, to join, and to bring ten friends! We get grumpy when we give out food and clothing and meet other needs and they never show up again.

Just like the needs of people are both spiritual and practical, the answer to how we can serve and evangelize effectively has spiritual and practical components. Spiritually, the enemy is against everything we are trying to do for the kingdom. Sharing our faith with unbelievers will never be without spiritual opposition. But, every person is a spiritual person who has spiritual issues, needs, and concerns. There is a spiritual element to each of us that we are called to reach and there is a practical part of life for each of us. People in need often have very practical things they need like food, water, shelter, and money. Unfortunately, the number of believers is small who are willing to do the work of serving people's needs and sharing God's live-changing message of love. ***“The harvest is great, but the workers are few,”*** Jesus said (Luke 10:2b). To get it done, we have to push past the fear, the hesitation, and the discomfort. Our willingness to serve and to share the gospel cannot be about us: it has to be about the bigger cause of our love for God and our love for the people who need God.

### **Our willingness to serve and to share the gospel cannot be about us.**

In Luke 10, Jesus says to the 70+ disciples, ***“I'm sending you out as lambs among wolves”*** (Luke 10:3). Jesus acknowledges that it is rough out there sharing the gospel. But if we are truly believers, we are still charged to go. We don't have to go alone, though. Jesus says, ***“pray to the Lord who is in charge of this harvest and ask Him to send more workers into His fields”*** (Luke 10:2). The Spirit of God is always with us. We can work with other believers to serve, to develop relationships, and to build trust. It is also up to us to be prayerful: for people's hearts to change, for the message to be clear, for their faith to grow. It should give us confidence and boldness to remember that it is God who does the changing. God is in charge of the harvest, not us. We are in charge of the work of serving and the work of demonstrating God's love.