

Love Your Neighbor As Yourself

Part Four: "Why"

Jared began with a shout out to our moms, and then a call for us to support mothers in Haiti, through our "Live Beyond" Maternity drive. See the table in the foyer for more information.

Last week, Jared spoke about looking at the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37) from the perspective of the common Jewish person in the ditch. This week, Jared talked about the motivation behind the meeting of peoples earthly needs. The Samaritan in the story not only helped the man out of the ditch and patched him up; he looked to the future and provided for what was next. While that was still material needs in the parable, it should cause us to think about "what's next" as we help people in their earthly distress.

Dr. David Vanderpool, with Live Beyond, asked a question to our mission team in Haiti at one of their devotional times: "Should the Kingdom of God have people in desperate need of basic food and water?" This is an important and worthy question to consider and we are called to respond. In the age of the World Wide Web, the lack of social justice is more visible than ever before; and a whole generation of people gained new motivation to "give a cup of water" to those in the remotest regions of the world. We must not see our mission as a church as purely spiritual. Jesus commanded and modeled ways we must meet the basic material needs of the people we encounter. A new phrase became common: "Preach the Gospel everywhere you go. If necessary, use words."

Unfortunately, we tend to define and live out our mission in "either/or" terms if we are not biblical and intentional in our practices. Somehow, in the last thirty years, many have become content with addressing only the material needs of the lost, and not accounting for "what's next".

Matthew 5: 13-16 speaks to our mission in a "both/and" context:

*"You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, **that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.**"*

Jesus healed the sick and fed the hungry, but then he **preached the good news** to the poor (Luke 7:22). We must follow his example. The tension between meeting the spiritual needs of the lost and attending to their physical needs as well is a *false tension*. It is not manipulation to share the good news with those we are serving. We are helping them with "what's next".

Preach the Gospel wherever you go. First, with your actions, then with your words. It will be necessary.

