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Reach Out and Touch Someone

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Series: Miscellaneous Messages

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INTO HIS LIKENESS RADIO

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Reach Out and Touch Someone

Just suppose this afternoon the phone should ring... and you pick it up, and say “hello”, and on the other end of the line is the Lord Jesus Himself. And just suppose He was to say to you, “What are you doing this week? Would you be interested in setting aside your regular schedule, and just walking through a typical week with me?”

Would you be excited or afraid or both of the above? Well, I tried to do that for a few days. I imagined I had received such a call, and taking just two chapters of scripture, I pretended to walk alongside Jesus as He gave Himself away.

Then I tried to imagine drawing up a schedule for a week of my own, and filling that schedule with the kind of people Jesus would spend time with, meeting the kinds of needs He would meet; touching the lives He would touch; living according to the priorities He would set. I imagined what kind of schedule I would set up if I were planning a week based on what He would do with a week. And suddenly a whole new concept emerged in my mind; a concept of what living the Christian life is really all about. With that in mind, I’m going to ask you to walk with me through the pages of one of the Gospels with Jesus for a brief period of His life...perhaps a week, perhaps two, we don’t know for sure, but we will walk...if you will...IN HIS STEPS!! And we will ask ourselves as we go, to reveal to us any truths God might want us to learn about how to give our lives away!

That’s the subject of this segment of our journey through the pages of Scripture. We began by asking ourselves “Where Has All the Love Gone?” The Love that JESUS insisted was the trademark of the Christian Faith; the Love that Jesus demonstrated in all of its splendor on that Cross when simply as a reflection of perfect love, He Gave Himself Away.

We learned that John, chapter three...defined that love for us... Love, we learned is not a feeling; love is an activity. It is the act of giving oneself for another without regard to their response,

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without regard for their worthiness, without regard even for how loveable they seem to be. God so loved...HE GAVE. That's how the Scripture defined it...He so loved the whole world; a world as yet unredeemed; a world as yet separated from Himself through rebellion to all He stood for. God so loved everyone, He gave. What did He give? He gave everything! He gave Himself away!

And why did He do it? "That whosoever believeth might have life". That's the reason He gave Himself Away, to demonstrate through the greatest act of love in History. how to find Eternal Life; how to be reconciled to that God of Love, and we began to ask ourselves some questions-questions about how He would have us go about giving our lives away.

And God has some definite marching orders for the Christian Army as they find themselves in the midst of the battlefields of life and they pass by the lives of these we will call the "disadvantaged". God has some definite instructions, indeed. His orders include what we must never do, where the "poor" or "unfortunate" are concerned.

We are told first of all that we were *never to despise them*, look down on, or condescend in our relationships with them.

We were *never to oppress them*, or take advantage of their disadvantage.

We are *never to mock them* or ridicule or mimic them in fun or derision.

We are *never to exploit them*, or use their weakness for our gain.

And lastly, but perhaps most painfully, we are never to ignore them; disregard them, walk around them, or walk away from them. We are never to shut our ears to their calls; never ignore their cries for help; never simply stay so far from them we cannot hear them calling.

And we are never to close our eyes to their hurts, never walk by them or look around them, lest we see with our eyes, that some of them, oh, so many of them are crying. In essence, God is saying to us: "Open Your Eyes...They're Crying!"

Our objective is to turn knowledge into understanding; to translate into our own personal experience the reality of God's love for those who are hurting; and our objective once we've done that is to give our lives away!

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Our title for this Lesson is “Reach out and Touch Someone”

Our Outline for this lesson is in three parts.

I- A Preview From Proverbs We Must Not Forget

II- A Journey With Jesus We Just Have To Take

III- A Series Of Questions We Just Have To Ask

Now if you will, put on your walking shoes. We’re going to take a walk down the dusty highways of reality with Jesus Christ. We’re going to spend a few days living life the way the Master lived it. We want to see what and who was important to Him. and we want to see just how Jesus translated into the fiber of everyday life the principles God’s message of love.

We will begin our journey in Matthew, chapter eight. Please turn if you will, to that portion of Scripture and we will move rather quickly through two chapters of that Gospel and see just what life in the trenches is really like. The foundation for Jesus’ ministry had already been laid. His life had already been characterized by events that had changed the course of history.

In chapter three, we witnessed His baptism...and the voice of His Father from Heaven.

This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

(Matthew 3:17b)

In Chapter four, Jesus, filled with the Spirit and led by the Spirit, went into the wilderness where He fasted for forty days and nights, and then successfully met the tempter head on; and wielding the Sword of the Spirit defeated the enemy and caused him to flee. In Chapters five, six, and seven, Jesus gathered His disciples on the side of a mountain for the world’s first Christian Growth Seminar—and hour after hour He taught them principles for practical Christian living.

He talked about Humility—He said

Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.

(Matthew 5:3)

He said:

Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

(Matthew 5:5)

He talked about self-control. He brought doctrine into the marketplace and talked about anger; even anger of the heart, forgiveness, and adultery (even adultery of the heart). He talked

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about divorce and retaliation. He talked about responsibility; about how to give, and how to pray, and how to set priorities. He talked about worry, and judging, and fruitfulness, and obedience.

Jesus, in one seminar, took the doctrines of the law and translated them into shoe leather living; and in effect, said it doesn't matter what you know. Unless you can learn to control your behavior, and finally even your attitudes, what you know won't really change the world, (ah, but WHO you know will!). And we read at the end of chapter seven that they were astonished at His teachings; at both what He said and at the authority with which He taught.

It would seem then, that Jesus, having seen His teaching ministry crowned with such success, would have retired to a classroom somewhere and documented His concepts, or hidden in a remote village and written a book called "The Master Speaks from the Mountain". But Jesus didn't come only to teach; Jesus came to live...and ultimately to die, so that you and I could not only hear, but see how God lives life on planet earth. God knew that if we could grasp the kind of life God lives in a human body, then we could relax and allow that same God to live that same life in our bodies, as His Holy Spirit floods our soul and takes control.

Now it was time for Jesus... to give Himself away!!!

We read, as chapter eight begins:

When He was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed Him. (Matthew 8:1)

You can visualize the crowd: Scribes and Pharisees - skeptical - but wanting to test this man's incredible wisdom. Devout Jews wondering about the authority with which He spoke. Intellectual searchers, wondering if indeed a new prophet had appeared on the horizon to dangle before them the latest philosophy.

The word was out! "Come hear the man of great wisdom. Come hear this amazing carpenter's son." But verse 2 begins:

And, behold, there came a leper and worshipped Him... (Matthew 8:2a)

Now any great teacher would know that you cannot stop ministering to thousands in order to stop and talk to one person. Right? Wrong! And any great teacher would know that you certainly cannot interrupt your classroom dignity by stopping to

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talk to an outcast. Right? Wrong on both counts!

You could just feel the rejection in the air when this lowly leper entered the scene. No one dared go near him. No one spoke. He was considered the outcast of outcasts. Surely, the Master would dispatch one of His deputies to run him off; or at best to get him out of sight before he scared off the “more acceptable” in the congregation. Right? Wrong again!

...and Jesus put forth His hand, and touched him...

(Matthew 8:3)

Jesus reached out and touched someone, and that someone just happened to be a no one to the rest of that crowd. But to Jesus, at this moment in His ministry, that disgusting looking shell of a man was where it was at. Here was a man with a need, who knew he had a need, and who believed that this man Jesus could meet that need. And of course, this man Jesus did just that!

Now honestly tell me, if you had been walking in Jesus’ steps and the crowds were pushing and shoving, just waiting for a word of wisdom to pour from your lips, would you have turned aside from their attentive ears, and finding the most disgusting outcast in the crowd, reached and touched?

Not I! I would have found a reason to cross over to the other side. I would have found a way to make it appear that I was too busy to be interrupted. I would have been afraid to be contaminated by his disease, both physically and socially. I would have been afraid of losing my following. But you and I said we were going to re-write our schedules to make them conform more perfectly to His. That may just mean that my day might have to begin by my stopping to talk to one of life’s outcasts—someone I purposely avoid.

Well, let’s write it down: Monday, 8:00 a.m.—Reach out and touch life’s socially unacceptable. Ours might not be a leper. It might be an addict, or an alcoholic whose life has spiraled downhill until every shred of respectability has dissolved; or it might be a convict whose very name makes him an untouchable. Anyway, write it down. If God should bring such a person our way, our schedule must have room, and our hearts must have room, as well.

And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him,

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And saying Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy,
grievously tormented,

And Jesus saith unto Him, I will come and heal him.

(Matthew 8:5-7)

Now wait a minute. Here He was, Jewish admirers feeding on His every word, wanting more, and a Roman soldier wants Him to heal his *servant boy*?

Why would the King of the Jews—the Messiah of History—stop what He was doing to honor such a request? A Roman captain? A slave boy who was paralyzed? There were people everywhere who were paralyzed; people everywhere who had needs. But this man came to Jesus; and this man humbled himself; and this man believed. That made this man the most important man in history at that one moment in history to the One about whom history was written.

And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour.

(Matthew 8:13)

It could be likened to this country being occupied by foreign soldiers, say from Iraq or Iran, and one of their officers interrupts a worship service to ask for aid for his hired help. We'd better write that on our schedules: 9:00 a.m.—topped to minister to the slave of an enemy officer.

Verse 14. Ought to be nap time by now. I'm tired just thinking about the pressures of the crowds, the decisions, the strain of ministering to unpopular people amidst the press of the masses. So Jesus turns into Peter's house. and verse 14 begins,

When Jesus was come into Peter's house, he saw his wife's mother who was sick with a fever.

(Matthew 8:14)

You and I would have ordered our staff to bring us some lunch and told them we didn't want to be disturbed. We would have looked and seen the kitchen, or the sofa, or the TV set. Jesus looked and saw someone crying. Someone who had a need. Peter's mother-in-law was down with a fever. "No big deal", you say, "We've been handling the heavy weight stuff this morning, the likes of lepers and paralytics. She just needs two aspirin and bed rest. Nothing important enough for the Master," you say.

Here's our word again, and He touched her."

He touched her hand, and the fever left her: and she arose, and ministered unto them.

(Matthew 8:15)

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He reached out and touched her. She had a need. He had the answer. He was never too busy to reach out and touch someone who had a need. Why are we?

We're racing through the mall, and we pass someone we know. And we know that someone is passing through troubled waters. We have two choices: hurry and make it to that sale before the good stuff is all picked over, or stop dead in our tracks, turn to that troubled soul and say, "Hey, am I glad to see you; have you got time for a cup of coffee?" We can choose not to interrupt our schedule which has been carefully designed to meet our needs; or we can reach out and touch someone; someone maybe no one else will touch. Are you beginning to see what walking with Jesus is like?

Same day:

When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and He cast out the spirits with His Word, and healed all that were sick: (Matthew 8:16)

They were waiting in line for Him to minister to them. At this point He wasn't preaching. He was touching. Each one had a different need, and these were toughies. Jesus met each one's individual needs with His Word. Each one! You say, "Wasn't He tired by now?" No doubt He was. No doubt He thought His arm would break if He were to reach out one more time, and touch one more person.

But one thing bothered Jesus more than a broken arm; and that was a broken heart. So He kept on reaching, and He kept on touching, until every need had been met.

Better add that to our schedule. Noon to midnight: counseling and ministering to a group of supposedly incurable and, in some cases, incorrigible people.

In verses 18 through 22 Jesus crossed over to the other side so He could be free from the multitudes to minister to individuals, and a scribe came to Him and said, "Lord, I want to join your Church, and I want to see your apartment. Why, I'll follow you wherever you go." Jesus answered. "I don't have an apartment. The foxes have holes, and the birds have nests, but God's Son doesn't have a permanent address." In case you think God owes you a bigger house, you might ponder that one. Jesus wasn't feeling sorry for Himself; He was just making a statement of fact. His priorities were people. And at this moment to best

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minister to people, the last thing He needed was a permanent address. Oh, He had one of those, and so do you. It's a palatial estate alongside your Father's. He's fixing it up for you, so by the time you get there, it'll be hand-tailored for you by a Master Carpenter. In the meantime, where you live just may not be your number one priority on planet earth. Whose lives you touch just might be.

So write down on your schedule 7:30 a.m. Tuesday— influential religious leader wants to visit you at your home. Pencil in, “no home to take Him to, too much to do.”

In verses 21-22 Jesus stops to deal with a disciple who is struggling with his priorities. What he wants to do is not unimportant, but He is struggling over how to delay doing the will of God in order to do it. Jesus simply gives Him a lesson in structuring time, and presses on. Write that down:

10:15 a.m. Tuesday... counseled with friend over the use of time. Wasn't sure friend liked the counsel. Press on.

In verses 23-27 Jesus takes a routine trip across the sea to the other side, His disciples tagging along. Jesus is going to a crusade meeting, right? He's only got so much time, right? His whole staff is with Him, right? Now God owes Him at least an uneventful trip, doesn't He? wrong? An uneventful trip won't teach anybody anything! What Jesus wants circumstantially is whatever will give Him the maximum opportunity to share His father's power and love. In this case, it happened to be a storm. Oh, how we avoid the storms of life! Jesus sailed right into this one so that those who were walking alongside Him could learn experientially how God behaves in a storm. God rests in a storm. And so do God's children *when He's in control!*

Write that down! 12:35 a.m. Tuesday, on my way to preach, car broke down. Got to demonstrate to my staff how God handles divine interruptions. Your concern was not your inconvenience, but how to minister to others through your inconvenience. God could handle the interruption. Your job was to reach out and touch someone through the interruption.

Let's go back to Matthew chapter eight. They get to the other side of the sea and there awaits them a pair of what you and I would call life's incurables. They were emotionally, physically, and spiritually beyond hope. Their behavior was such that not only were they affected, but the whole area lived in dread of

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crossing their paths. They were mad men, unable to control their behavior and bent on making life miserable for all who passed their way. Until they met Jesus.

You and I would have redrawn the map so we didn't have to pass their way. No need asking for trouble, right? Wrong! Jesus wasn't afraid of these men. Jesus looked beyond their bizarre behavior and you know what He saw? They were crying. Their behavior was simply symptomatic of a spiritual disease.

Now what Jesus did that day may not have qualified Him for the President's Counsel on Economic Stability. When He got through, the cost of bacon probably tripled. [That should have at least angered the Gentile population.] But Jesus' concerns were not for pigs but for people. So He reached out and touched someone; someone no one ever dared to touch before. The result?

And, behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus:

(Matthew 8:34a)

Did they want to make Him Prime Minister? No they wanted to minister Him right out of town.

His popularity on the Gallup poll took a drop, but His marks on Jehovah's scale of love went straight up. Jesus was not in the business of doing what was politically expedient, but rather what was spiritually necessary. We need to remember that.

Chapter nine, verse one:

and He entered into a ship, and passed over, and came into His own city.

Home on furlough, eh? Time for fund-raising and fellowship eh? Not exactly.

And, behold, they brought to Him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee.

(Matthew 9:2)

Jesus dealt with his physical problem, but His objective was spiritual.

"Thy sins be forgiven," He said, and oh, boy, did that stir up a hornet's nest. It's okay to heal folks if you have to, but you start on this sin stuff and the fur will fly. Even the world wants to be healed; it just doesn't want to deal with the issue of sin. So the Church can leave its position of cold indifference to one of compassion and concern so long as in the process it forgets that

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the goal of it's love is that "whosoever believeth shall not perish." Then the ministering becomes suspect, because the message deals with sin.

Write that down: Wednesday morning—home at last. At the airport, just off the plane, you confront a man with two kinds of needs. You meet one to get to the other. You talk to him about his sins and your welcoming committee thins out immediately.

Verse 9: Jesus moves on, and as He is on His way, His eye catches the eye of- of all people; a tax-collector. Now if you wanted someone who was suspect; someone whose integrity was likely to be questioned, all you had to do was mention a tax-collector. Better pass him by quickly; if people see you talking to him, your reputation goes out the window.

But Jesus didn't see in Matthew what he was. That's our problem. Jesus saw in Matthew what he could become—when the Holy Spirit took control of His life. So He turned to Matthew and said; "Hey—How would you like to come with me? Be a part of my team? I need another staff member." It would be the same as your inviting a suspected embezzler to your Bible Study. Well, can you think of anyone with a greater need? Anyone more likely to understand "grace"? You say, but I'm more interested in the "mainstream of society." You mean the "safestream" of society.

Well, if Jesus wasn't already in hot water for his choice of prospects, He was now.

And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat [*had dinner*] in the house, behold, many publicans [*tax collectors*] and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples.

(Matthew 9:10)

Do you see what's happening? One tax collector is accepted into the fold, and the room fills up with tax collectors. Some would say, that's what happens when you reach out to the wrong people. Jesus would say, that's what happens when you reach out to the *right* people. That's what He came for; to call sinners to repentance. Here he was eating supper, and the whole room fills up with bona fide prospects; people who knew they had needs. Jesus was ecstatic. The Pharisees were horrified. "You're eating with no-nos" they cried. "No, I'm eating with some of my Father's choicest," He, in essence, replied. "I'm eating with people who *know* they have a need."

About that time, John's disciples came to Him with a thorny

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theological question, which was hardly what these tax-collectors needed, but Jesus quietly answered and

While He spake these things unto them, behold, there came a certain ruler, and worshipped Him, saying, My daughter is even now dead: but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live.
(Matthew 9:18)

So the ruler, possibly the rabbi of the local synagogue, had a serious family problem. And He interrupted this deep theological controversy to cry out for help. Jesus immediately excused Himself, and got up and started for the rabbi's house.

But in verse 20, while He was still on his way, a woman who had an incurable blood disease and had been hemorrhaging for twelve straight years reached out and touched Him!

Now take note: Jesus had plenty of reason to brush her aside. There were millions of the likes of her, and her timing was way off. He was on His way to bring life to the lifeless body of a ruler's child. Certainly no time to stop and take on another problem.

But Jesus understood something most of us have never learned. That when you are in the will of God, *time stands still if necessary*, and God will not send you needs to meet without multiplying the minutes so you can handle life's divine interruptions without losing your grip on the tasks at hand.

So Jesus, who understood that the ruler's child would still be there fifteen minutes hence, stopped to minister to this woman of faith. The next verse reads

And when Jesus came to the ruler's house,...
(Matthew 9:23a)

In other words, he didn't stop and have a testimony meeting over the healed woman. He simply, quietly went on His way to the next need; and He met that need, and the child lived.

And when Jesus departed thence, two blind men followed him, crying and saying, Thou son of David, have mercy on us.
(Matthew 9:27)

You say, "Gimme a break...He no sooner met one need than another appeared." He would say, "Why not? The son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." (Matthew 20:28) Jesus came to give His life away. He would simply say, "I came not to do mine own will (not to please myself) ...the Son of Man came to do the Father's will, and some of the Father's children are in trouble." So Jesus

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simply kept on, and He kept on meeting needs.

Next He encountered two blind men, men who could not see, and more than that, they could not see the reality of eternity—until they met Jesus.

Then touched He their eyes... (Matthew 9:29a)

There is our word again. Jesus reached out and touched someone. He continued, without reservation, to give Himself away.

As they went out [*in other words, immediately*], behold, they brought to him a dumb man possessed with a devil.

And when the devil was cast out, the dumb spake: and the multitudes marveled, It was never so seen in Israel
(Matthew 9:32,33)

More spiritual needs, more touching, more giving, more loving, that's living. Jesus continued to give Himself away.

How does your schedule look for next week? Any similarity between yours and His? Keep going.

And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.
(Matthew 9:35)

Jesus wasn't content just to stay in one place and minister to those who came to Him. He went from city to city looking for people with needs; looking for people who were crying. And He had no trouble finding them. Everywhere He went, people were crying; and everywhere He went, He touched them. And when He touched them, the crying stopped and the rejoicing began.

But there was one thing Jesus did not allow Himself to do. He did not allow the pressures of the ministry to cause Him to become insensitive. He did not allow the activities of the ministry to become an end within, themselves. Most of us would have become so enamored with our success we would have devoted our time to writing brochures about our organization, or spent our time raising support to further the work. We would have been satisfied that we had tasted spiritual success, and begun to bask in the glory of it.

Not so with Jesus...

But when He saw the multitudes he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd.

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Then saith He unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few;

Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that he will send forth laborers into His harvest. (Matthew 9:36-38)

Jesus never forgot whose harvest it was. And Jesus never got so caught up in the activity of the ministry that He was too busy to let His heart break for those who were still crying; or too busy to stop and pray for His Father to send forth more laborers to reap the Father's harvest. Now look at your schedule. If you're following the Master's timetable your plans and priorities take this shape:

Day one begins when you stop everything to spend time with one of life's most unwanted characters. You follow that by stopping to minister to the needs of the child of your worst enemy. One of your staff member's mothers-in-law is sick, so you stop to pay her a visit. Then you spend the rest of the day ministering to a group of uncontrollable, apparently incurable outcasts.

You head for your next assignment with your team and a horrendous storm threatens life and limb. But you rejoice because now your helpers can come to meet the God of the storms and see how God handles Himself in what appears to be a sinking ship.

You head immediately for the local hospital where a ward of incurable madmen clamor for your counsel. As you leave, you stop to meet the needs of a paralytic, interview a suspected embezzler for full-time Christian service, have dinner and spend the evening with a houseful of what the world calls loners and losers.

You move on to help a rabbi's dying daughter and are interrupted by a woman with an incurable blood disease. You leave the rabbi's house and two blind men clamor for your attention. You minister to them, and your friends bring you a hopeless deaf mute who is hurting and crying to be helped. From there you embark on a preaching mission, covering dozens of villages where you seek out the hopeless, the helpless, the lame, and the blind.

While you are in the midst of ministering, your workers come upon you and find you weeping—not over your own weariness—but weeping over the sins and the needs of the multitudes you

have not yet been able to touch. And yet your whole life has been reaching and touching, reaching and touching, and most of those to whom you reach and most of those you touch are not among life's most accepted—most of them are among life's most rejected.

So it is in the life of one who says to God. "I'm tired of living a make-believe life. I know the principles. I'm in the process of learning to become obedient. Now as I grow, Lord, take me out where people are; and teach me to live the life you lived. Not a life characterized by selfishness—but a life characterized by *selflessness*; a life that crucifies itself daily; takes up its cross, and follows Jesus."

"It follows Him down a road lined with blind people, and lame people, and rejected people, and dying people, and troubled people; a road filled with lepers and slaves, and sick mothers-in-law, and storms and madmen, and paralytics, and suspected embezzlers, and hoodlums and those with incurable diseases; those who can't talk—and yet are crying to be heard—those who can't see and yet are pleading to be seen; those who have no friends, but know that there is somewhere "a friend who sticks closer than a brother."

We have followed the Master for a few brief days of his earthly ministry; and what we have seen ought to at least raise some pertinent questions about how and why He spent His time. I believe the five questions we must answer are these:

Question 1- Where did Jesus go?

Answer: Wherever people had needs. The world, and indeed the religious world, did not often understand his itinerary; they may not understand yours, either. But Jesus, the leader of the flock; the King of the Kingdom did not spend the bulk of His time going to meetings to plan how to meet needs. Jesus spent the bulk of His time going where the needs were, and He took His committee with Him. He knew they would learn more by seeing than by meeting, more by experiencing than by deliberating. And here is an essence of discipleship many of us so often forget. We are caught up in meeting across tables to listen to our own needs and talk about our own problems instead of simply saying, "Hey, I'm going out to the ghettos—or into the prisons, or to the orphanage, let's go together." Jesus went where needs were—and of course, wherever He went, there were needs—because

the Father had opened His eyes—and He could see people were crying.

Question 2- What did Jesus do first?

Answer: He met their needs. Strangely enough, he wasn't passing out tracts. He wasn't even pasting up billboards for His coming crusade, though none of those are wrong. But Jesus knew that before a blind man could catch a glimpse of spiritual vision, he at least needed to know that God cared that He couldn't see. Now, Jesus didn't make every blind man in Israel to see. But I believe every blind, man who ever crossed His path knew that Jesus cared that He was blind, that He understood His darkness and that He hurt for his hurt. Which brings us to question number three

Question 3- Why did Jesus spend so much time meeting physical needs?

Answer: To show men and women who God really is; to show them that God is not indifferent to our suffering. That God is love. And love cares love will not heal all physical hurts. Love knows better. Love will not keep everyone from dying. Love knows better. But Love will never see a man weeping that He will not weep. Love cares, and the world had developed a concept of God based on the man-made religious legalism of the Pharisees of Jesus' day, and in the process all they saw was a God of ritual, a God of tradition, a God of works. Sound familiar?

They didn't know God cried. They didn't know God cared. They didn't know God loved they didn't know. So Jesus reached out and touched them; met their needs, healed their hurts. And as Jesus reached out and touched them, suddenly their eyes were opened, and they saw; really saw for the first time; who God really is. Once they saw who God really was, then they could believe what God was about to do.

Question 4- Why did Jesus want them to know just who God really was?

Answer: That they might believe and be saved. His objective was singular that men and women might have their sins forgiven. That was the touchstone of all His healing, of all His reaching; of all His touching. Thy faith has made thee whole. Thy sins are forgiven thy faith has saved thee.

Jesus knew that healed bodies and healed minds were

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meaningless unless they led to transformed souls, so He loved them to lead them to salvation.

Question 5- becomes quite obvious: How should this pattern affect my life?

Answer: “As the father hath sent me”, Jesus said, “so send I you.” Your calling and my calling is to go wherever there are needs. Why? So that whenever possible, we can help to meet those needs. Why? So we can show men and women the love of God. Why? So seeing and experiencing a God who cares, they can believe He cares enough to save them; and believing on Him they might come to experience eternal life.

That’s the pattern of New Testament ministering. It isn’t exactly what some of us want to do. We would like to build a church, put a steeple on top with a bell, and from the safe confines of our well-sheltered religiosity, ring the bell and watch the socially acceptable lost come find us, and hopefully in the process, come to find *him*.

Jesus’ plan was different. He had the people come together long enough to become equipped to do the work of the ministry; then He sent them out—no, He *took* them out—and He took them to life’s ghettos, and life’s hospitals, and life’s orphanages, and life’s prison houses, and life’s sin centers, and He said, “look, open your eyes, these people are crying.”

And He said “Now that we know they are crying... let’s do something about it. Let’s reach out and touch them. Go ahead, it’s not contagious. Pain is not contagious. Loneliness is not contagious. Rejection is not contagious. But Love is. Go ahead, reach out and touch them. That’s right, really touch them. Let God love them through the likes of you. .And as God loves them, tell them just what that love has gone and done.”

Tell them Love died for them—to live in them—now they are ready to listen, because love has touched them.

I believe today is the day some of us need to bury once and for all the syndrome of self-pity that so plagues us and causes us to sit around in spiritual circles talking about our problems until our problems become the center of our lives. Some of us are so preoccupied with *our* problems and *our* needs, that *our* Christianity has become a form of inbred self-pity.

I believe today might be the day some of us need instead

Reach Out and Touch Someone

to lay ourselves before God and ask Him to take us outside of ourselves-out into that world of hurting, hungry, lonely people, and forgetting about ourselves, considering the needs of others as greater than ourselves, begin giving ourselves, away.

The truth of the matter is: if we will but open our eyes, we will see that everywhere we go, people are hurting; people are crying. Dare we spend this week asking God now to take us into their worlds, into their lives, and literally allow us no literally compel us to reach out, and with hands of love touch their lives with the Love of God?

We have walked today in our imaginations where Jesus walked. Now each of us, in some way, will actually walk out into that same world. If, in that world, we dare to walk where Jesus walked, what will our lives be like? I pray that, at least to some degree, we have found out.

So I close by asking this question:

REACH OUT AND TOUCH SOMEONE

How would you like to take a week
And just walk where Jesus walked?
How would you like to spend some time
With those with whom Jesus talked?

How would you like to rub elbows
With the outcasts, the homeless, the lame;
How would you like to invest your life
In lepers—in Jesus' name

How would you like to touch madmen?
Spend time with them one-on-one?
How would you like to feel the hurts
Of a Father who's losing his son?

How would you like to have dinner
Surrounded by hoodlums and thieves
How would you like to look on their hurts
And grieve the way Jesus grieves?

How would you like to take a week
And just walk the road Jesus trod
Oh, Beloved, take that week
And you'll find the heart of God.

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