

**Life on Mission: Serve**  
**September 23, 2018**  
**Lynn Haven UMC**

**Introduction**

Jesus replied with a story: "A Jewish man was traveling from Jerusalem down to Jericho, and he was attacked by bandits. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him up, and left him half dead beside the road. "By chance a priest came along. But when he saw the man lying there, he crossed to the other side of the road and passed him by. A Temple assistant walked over and looked at him lying there, but he also passed by on the other side. "Then a despised Samaritan came along, and when he saw the man, he felt compassion for him. Going over to him, the Samaritan soothed his wounds with olive oil and wine and bandaged them. Then he put the man on his own donkey and took him to an inn, where he took care of him. The next day he handed the innkeeper two silver coins, telling him, 'Take care of this man. If his bill runs higher than this, I'll pay you the next time I'm here.' "Now which of these three would you say was a neighbor to the man who was attacked by bandits?" Jesus asked. The man replied, "The one who showed him mercy." Then Jesus said, "Yes, now go and do the same." (Luke 10:30-37 NLT)

What sets apart the Samaritan in this story? Compassion and action. It is not enough to care. We must be willing to put our feet in motion when our hearts are stirred. If the condition of others is affecting us in some way we have to find a way to make it more important than what we have to check off our daily to do lists. Of course, there are situations beyond our ability to change. But when we can step in to make a difference, are we? We are missing Jesus' point if we choose to keep our Christianity to ourselves. This week we will discuss the valuable lessons we can learn from enacted servanthood in the places we live, work and play as we seek to live a life on mission.

**Digging Deeper**

**We serve others when we care about them by...**

**Seeing their CONDITION.**

- The only way we can fulfill our mission is to see the folks we're trying to reach, by looking through the lens of compassion. There is a popular Christian song by Brandon Heath called "Give Me Your Eyes". In it, he sings about how he misses so many things in others because he just doesn't take the time to *really* see them. He sings for God to give him His eyes for just one second so he can finally see the things he has been missing. We all have a story to tell. Some of us are just better at keeping our books closed. Have you ever asked God to give you His eyes for the forgotten and broken hearted? Take the time to be fully aware of the people around you this week. Pay attention to them as you go about your day. Search for ways to bring a smile to someone's face. If we were looking at people the way God does, we would see more than their circumstances. We would see their humanity and surely find similarities within. We are so much more alike than we are different.

**Having the proper AGENDA.**

- Do you let God set your agenda? Jeremiah 7:23 tells us that God wants to command our steps. If we do this we will be blessed and all will be well with us. Sounds good right? But if you read on to the next verse we will find what most of us actually do. "But they did not listen or pay attention; instead, they followed the stubborn inclinations of their evil hearts. They went backward and not forward." Ouch. Are we really so hard-headed that we're going backwards? Everybody seems to be

so busy we leave no time for helping a brother or sister in need. Would it require a major course correction for you to surrender your agenda to God by asking for His will to be done, not your own, as you move throughout your day? Food for thought: if we take too many unguided steps, we might just find ourselves lost! Try walking in pace with God and...selah (check out that Hebrew word ☺).

### **Choosing a helpful RESPONSE.**

- The opposite of love is not hate, it is apathy or not caring. We begin to live our life on mission when we care about others enough to serve them by choosing a helpful response to meet their needs – whatever that might be. We have to start thinking about how we can love others, support them, and journey with them in their suffering in a way that is encouraging and helps rather than hurts them. It is a condition of the heart and the task can seem daunting as we oftentimes don't know where to begin. Remember, you don't have to move a mountain, but maybe you can move a molehill. What is something small you could do to help someone in your circles of influence this week?

### **Keeping the END RESULT in mind.**

- If you knew the secret to maintaining a life of contentment, come what may, wouldn't you want everyone else to know it too? Well you do (and you should)! We should always be on the lookout for ways to share God's good name and His promises for those who believe. And when you've finished shouting from the rooftops, consider serving in some capacity as another outlet. When we serve others in Jesus' name, our generous acts come with no strings attached, but we have an end result in mind – getting people saved. Having an ulterior motive in this case is surely quite alright! Have you ever considered the potential salvation of others to be a possible outcome of your involvement in a particular activity? If not, would that possibility motivate you to serve now? To quote the movie "God's Not Dead: A Light in the Darkness": "Sometimes all it takes is a spark. Something very small but the spark becomes a flame and if that flame spreads, the power can be so overwhelming it transforms everything around it." Jesus be near.

### **Conclusion**

We can never live life on mission until we care about others by having the proper agenda – not task-oriented, but people-oriented; not self-serving, but other-serving. This week, ask God to open your eyes to some needs that surround you right now. Then, resolve with God's help, to serve those folks and show them that you care, so that ultimately, you can share the message of Christ with them.