The Believers Role In A Changing World
“We Must Be Practically Involved”
(Part 3)

Intro: About 15 years ago I began getting very involved with the schools and helping out with D & A issues. The school began sending me to training. I’ll never forget one conference I attended at Sunriver. Seminar from former pastor on how to get the community involved. He went off on churches – Don’t expect much from them! This is the world’s perspective!

In order to make a difference in this world, we must be involved in practical ways.

HOW?

I. Be Insulated Not Isolated

I John 2:15 “Stop loving this evil world and all that it offers you...” (NLT)

- People’s attempts to not love this world they chose to remove themselves from it. They have chosen isolation. BUT, Jesus never said to do this!

A. The fallacy of isolation

1. Isolation leads to spiritual atrophy (explain atrophy)
   - The tension that exists living out our faith in a fallen world teaches us how to trust Christ / how to depend on Him / builds character and develops spiritual endurance
   - Isolation from the world doesn’t make you stronger, it makes you a spiritual wimp! (no tension) We are not called to isolate from the world, we are called to overcome it!

2. Isolation contradicts the believer’s mission

Mark 16:15 “Go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone, everywhere” (NLT)

- How can we accomplish this if we isolate from the people Jesus died to save? Jesus said to go to everyone, everywhere! This means the nice places and the not so nice places. Nice people and not so nice people.
- Our Mexico team just came back from a “not so nice” place. But they needed to see the love of God demonstrated practically!
- Churches have a tendency to retreat from the world instead of invading it.
B. The necessity of spiritual insulation

James 1:27 “...Real religion, the kind that passes before God is this: Reach out to the homeless and loveless in their plight, and guard against corruption from the godless world.” (Message) Insulation NOT isolation!

- What is spiritual insulation? In a lot of ways, it’s like physical insulation. Here in the NW, when you’re in a harsh environment, you learn to dress for it. You learn to insulate yourself.
- Some Christians are like this. Not dressed for the environment! Spiritual hypothermia – environment is taking its toll on you.

1. We insulate with the armor of God (Eph 6:10-18)
   This is the clothing of a believer who is committed to overcoming in a fallen world. 7 articles of clothing we can choose to put on. 7 commitments / decisions that insulate you in this world.
   - Helmet of Salvation / Breastplate of righteousness / Belt of truth / Feet fitted with the Gospel / Shield of faith / Sword of the Spirit / Prayer
   - Explain each piece – Multimedia slides

2. We insulate with loving, accountable relationships
   - You should never be alone in a harsh environment. Our commitment to one another helps us overcome the world in which we live in.
   - 58 times in the NT the term “one another” is used referring to our responsibility to each other. (encourage / love / pray / support /
   - Why not make this year the time you will move out of isolation into the insulating environment of relationships?
   - One of the reasons your relationship with God is struggling and the environment of the world is taking its toll on you is because you are not experiencing these kinds of Biblical relationships. You’re simply not dressed right to function in this world.

II. Be Compassionate Not Condemning

Matt. 9:36 “He felt great compassion for the crowds that came, because their problems were so great and they didn’t know where to go for help...” (NLT)

- Over and over again this phrase is repeated as Jesus encountered people in need.
• Unfortunately, the church has lost its compassion for the people Jesus died for. Instead of compassion, a spirit of condemnation has taken it’s place.
• The church is great at condemning the culture, pointing out what is wrong with it, but has a bad track record at demonstrating compassion for it. The church is great at throwing rocks instead of healing wounds.

How do we develop compassion for a lost world?

A. Focus on Christ’s compassion for you
Matt. 18:21-35 (Summarize story)
Matt. 18:27 “And the lord of that slave felt compassion and released him and forgave him the debt.” (NASB)
Matt. 18:33 “Should you not also have had mercy on your fellow slave, even as I had mercy on you?” (NASB)

1. Compassion is a result of us realizing just how much mercy we have received from God. His compassion for us is the entire rationale for us demonstrating compassion for others
2. Until we begin to get a handle on this, we’re no different then the evil slave in the story. It will be impossible for us to view people through the eyes of Jesus
3. We’re all like the slave who was forgiven the debt he couldn’t pay back. It’s not just the drug addict or dealer / person with a life of crime / or the immoral lifestyle / It’s for those who grew up in church. (I grew up in church – I don’t remember anything else!) Yet, I’ve been forgiven much!
4. This truth has to get a grip on your heart. Every one of us has been forgiven a debt that was impossible for us to pay.
5. When you finally see this for what it is, you begin to see the absurdity of us not having compassion for others. When you begin to understand the size of the debt you have been released from compassion is the result!

B. Guard your heart from being desensitized
1. It’s just so easy to become desensitized to all the human suffering going on around us. We are bombarded with it! We see thousands of images every week (news / paper / online / etc…) Emotionally, we just shut down in order to deal with it.
2. The danger in doing this is we start becoming hard-hearted to those around us God has called us to be involved in meeting their needs
Deut. 15:7-8 “But if there are any poor people in your towns…do not be hard-hearted or tight fisted toward them. Instead, be generous and lend them whatever they need.” (NLT)
3. Our hearts can’t break for every need in the world. None of us have enough emotional energy for that. BUT, our hearts do need to break for some things. (Like what?)

4. Start with your own community. Our first responsibility is to the people that God puts at our doorsteps! Open your heart up to the needs that exist right here!
   - We have poor in our community who need help
   - We have no D & A treatment for any youth in our community (800 HS / 600 Middle School)
   - We have limited options for adults
   - We have people prisoners to their debt. (Financial Peace)
   - We have people prisoners to their broken relationships – Whose going to help them learn a different way to live?
   - We have students dropping out of school.
   - Widows / elderly who can’t maintain their homes

5. It’s easy to point a finger at what is wrong. Yet, God has called us to lend a hand. Will you simply ask God to give you compassion for the people around you?

6. Start driving through Molalla asking God to give you His eyes to view the community through. Lord, give me Your compassion.

III. Be Involved Not Indifferent
   - Genuine compassion results in meeting needs. It results in getting personally and practically involved.
   - It’s easy to become indifferent. It’s easy to see the needs and think, “Hey, it’s not my problem. I’m not responsible!”
   - Matt. 25:31-46 (Story of the Sheep and the Goats – Summarize)
     Matt. 25:35-36 “For I was hungry, and you fed me. I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger, and you invited me into your home. I was naked, and you gave me clothing. I was sick, and you cared for me. I was in prison, and you visited me.” (NLT)
     Matt. 25:40 “…I assure you, when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were doing it to me!” (NLT)
   - The difference in their faith was that the sheep’s genuine faith resulted in meeting practical needs.

A. A genuine faith compels involvement
   James 2:15-17 “Suppose you see a brother or sister who needs food or clothing, and you say, ‘Well, good-bye and God bless you; stay warm and eat well,’ - but then don’t give that person any food or clothing. What good does that do? ...Faith
“Building Lives With Purpose Through His POWER” Prayer / Outreach / Worship / Edification / Relationships

We are a church that is committed to being practically involved in our community. This is our role in this world.

1. We need to be insulated not isolated
2. We need to be compassionate not condemning
3. We need to be involved not indifferent

What changes is God asking you to make this morning so that your response in this world reflects that you are practically involved representing Him?

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