

## **Subject (series) "The Caring Church" – Part 3**

### **Scripture Reading: Acts 2:41-47**

#### **Part 1**

- I.     **It Starts With the Heart of Our Father**
- II.    **Care Starts Early**
- III.   **How Is the Church to Know?**
- IV.    **Where Does Care Come From?**
- V.     **Stop, Look and Reach Out**
- VI.    **Changed by What You See**
- VII.   **The Search Continues**

A look around many churches today reveals a group of people doing reasonably well.

How would Jesus profile the person who is not attending your church?

#### **III.    Can We See Jesus Hurting?**

How we view the person not going to church depends on how we see Jesus.

What does the Savior look like to church people?

**Now for tonight:** (3) things and I'm through:

#### **I.       What Is Your Picture of Christ?**

Isaiah illustrates the suffering Christ graphically in chapters 52 and 53 of his prophecy.

Today, Christ is a success in the business world, always a powerful warrior and ever a miracle worker who walks on the water to meet any of our requests.

Isaiah breaks into our range of vision with a much different Christ.

[Isaiah 52:13](#) says "Behold, My Servant shall... be exalted and extolled and be very high."

That's worthy of a king.

#### **I.       Is a Ramp Enough?**

**Meet Mary.** Her face is bruised, especially around the eyes.

Then **Martha** comes up the ramp at the side of the church with her husband in a wheelchair.

#### **II.      What Do Believers See?**

But when we see the exalted One in the passage, He is unlike any king we have ever seen.

The next two verses tell us what the exalted One looks like:

Just as many were astonished at you, so His visage was marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men; so shall He sprinkle many nations. Kings shall shut their mouths at Him; for what had not been told them they shall see, and what they had not heard they shall consider ([Isaiah 52:14-15](#)).

Kings would be appalled because they were made to look at Him.

The people expected a king like the kings on earth—dressed in fine linen, robes and all the trappings of power.

The next few verses in Isaiah continue to describe him as One who was suffering, despised, and rejected by others:

Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of dry ground. He has no form or comeliness; and when we see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him. He is despised and rejected by men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed ([53:1-5](#)).

Notice that Christ was not viewed as a powerful warrior riding the clouds of glory and returning to earth as He is depicted in the Book of Revelation. Rather, He is the Healer on earth who was wounded in order to make the relief of our sorrows possible.

He comes to those He has identified with and ministered to them.

In the same way, Christ comes to the modern church in the form of the poor, the downcast, the handicapped and the abused of the world.

[Matthew 25:31-46](#) describes the judgment of Christ.

#### **Matthew 25:31-46 (KJV)**

<sup>31</sup> When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:

<sup>32</sup> And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth *his* sheep from the goats:

<sup>33</sup> And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

<sup>34</sup> Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

<sup>35</sup> For I was an hungry, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:

<sup>36</sup> Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

<sup>37</sup> Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw

we thee an hungred, and fed *thee*? or thirsty, and gave *thee* drink?

<sup>38</sup> When saw we thee a stranger, and took *thee* in? or naked, and clothed *thee*?

<sup>39</sup> Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?

<sup>40</sup> And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done *it* unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done *it* unto me.

<sup>41</sup> Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

<sup>42</sup> For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink:

<sup>43</sup> I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not.

<sup>44</sup> Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?

<sup>45</sup> Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did *it* not to one of the least of these, ye did *it* not to me.

<sup>46</sup> And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

At that time, Christ will inform each person passing by Him that He was on earth, giving them an opportunity to reach out to Him.

He was there as the poor, the weak and the needy.

Sadly, many will be rejected at the Judgment because they did not embrace Him by ministering to the broken, the battered and the bruised.

## II. Is There Value in Caring for the Hurting?

The examples the church follows are often the opposite of the examples Christ left us.

Rather than following the One who went to the oppressed, we elevate the overcomer.

Instead of following Him to the afflicted, we rush to the unaffected.

We have the mind of Christ when we respond to the question of [Isaiah 53:8](#), "Who will declare His generation?" by becoming a generation "acquainted with grief" as He was.

- Core values are the most important ones held by the church.
- Core values are not developed overnight; they are not the product of a late-night meeting of a single board or committee.
- Core values are actually the reflection of the existing values of the church.
- Core values in the church incorporate those priorities the church is currently developing.

Displaying its foremost ideals, the [core values](#) of a church state clearly and consistently what the church holds most dear.

A church's very existence is dependent on how it [cares](#).

## III. How Can the Church Minister With Care?

Can we tolerate the suffering of those who are not yet delivered?

Does the church see itself as invincible or able to absorb pain?

Is *tragedy* a word often *spoken* but *heard* much less in our worship?

Look at Mary, Martha, and Martha's husband.

The congregation rises at the end of the sermon, and a woman walks up the aisle...

The Caring Church.

We will stop here for tonight...

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This series of sermons are taken from the Book, *The Caring Church* by Oliver McMahan

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