

Subject (series) “The Caring Church”

Scripture Reading: Acts 2:41-47

Review of 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**

Do the unchurched see the local church around the corner "faring sumptuously"—parading its order of service before the community week after week?

More people look at the church than the average congregation realizes.

They see a group of people who have a lot of material things.

They see them clothed, happy and well-fed.

While the church enjoys the blessings of God, the unchurched in need, who are desperate and hurting, see believers through the lens of pain, poverty, and crisis.

Somehow the gap must be bridged.

How can the church on the corner change from one that *cares* and has a few ministries, to one that is actually a *caring* church?

How can it bridge the gap between the hurting and unchurched, and the blessed within the church?

I repeat: A *caring* church is much more than a church with a *care* ministry.

VII. **The Search Continues**

Look again at the **Smiths**.

How pleasing it would be to the heavenly Father if the greeter's first thoughts were, "*Praise the Lord, this is just what we have been waiting for—a new family in need. Here is someone to whom we can minister.*"

Now tonight...

Part 2

Subject: “Broken to Be Poured Out!”

Introduction: The New Testament church is a suffering church.

Today's church, however, avoids brokenness while equating health with relief, strength with painlessness and reconciliation with burden and reproof.

Instead of seeing the Cross as a broken vessel, they only view it as a quick and easy solution for today's situations.

We often act as though we are merely opting for holiness in a "Cross-less" pursuit.

Pain is not the great escape of the church; rather, it is the gateway to *care*.

Following Jesus is more than writing a mission statement; it is moving to travail for the world.

The ministry of *care* can only be realized by passing through the doorway of brokenness.

The church must embrace this concept, not escape it, for true compassion is only felt as we are broken.

I. **Is a Ramp Enough?**

We care, We love you and We miss you are phrases commonly used in the church community.

So are: *have faith, draw close to God and be open to the Spirit*
Words that often describe the goals of our spirituality are *stronger, bigger and better*.

These words are also the standard by which we frequently measure our churches.

What if we were told that *marred, weak and broken* were the new words to be sought after in the church?

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?**

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

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?

When believers are told in **Hebrews 12:1-3** to receive faith from Christ by looking on Him, the image we are given is Christ hanging on the cross.

Not once in chapter 11's descriptions of faith are we shown the Christ of glory.

To know Christ in the "power of His resurrection," Paul explained in **Philippians 3:10**, one has to know Christ in the "fellowship of His sufferings."

Philippians 3:10 (KJV)

¹⁰That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

The word *fellowship* implies we must embrace His suffering.

Drawn to the suffering, the believer must minister to them just as Christ used suffering as a gateway to minister to others.

We will stop here for tonight...

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

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