

# HELPING THE HURTING WITH HOPE

## LESSON 4: Why Do You Want to Help Me?

### OPENING PRAYER

### INTRODUCTION

If want to get motivated to start eating healthy, you need to know why. If you are going to start managing your money better, you need to know why. If we as a congregation are going to help the hurting with hope, we also need to know why. Knowing why gives you a purpose. Knowing why lets you ask and answer difficult questions. Knowing why makes something important and worth doing. We've seen who the hurting are and what they are like. If one of them were to ask you, "Why do you want to help me?" how would you answer? Let's allow Scripture to inform and motivate our answer.

### SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

1.) Before Jesus removed himself visibly at his ascension, he gave his followers directions as to what they were to do as his Christian people. Read Matthew 28:18-20 and pick out what his followers were to do and then give a reason why each one is important to those who are hurting.

**Matthew 28:18-20** Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup> Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

2.) Jesus didn't distance himself from those in society who were seen as outcasts and misfits. He saw the hurting for who they were and what they needed. As you read Jesus' response to those who looked down upon the hurting in his day, use his response to give reasons why we want to help the hurting.

**Mark 2:15-17** While Jesus was having dinner at Levi's house, many tax collectors and "sinners" were eating with him and his disciples, for there were many who followed him. <sup>16</sup> When the teachers of the law who were Pharisees saw him eating with the "sinners" and tax collectors, they asked his disciples: "Why does he eat with tax collectors and 'sinners'?" <sup>17</sup> On hearing this, Jesus said to them, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

3.) Jesus' forgiveness that he brought was not just for "sinners" in general but was also for his own tormentors. As these sections of Scripture are read, note the variety of ways Jesus was tormented. Which of these do you think would be the most difficult to forgive and why?

**Matthew 27:27-31** Then the governor's soldiers took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole company of soldiers around him. <sup>28</sup> They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, <sup>29</sup> and then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on his head. They put a staff in his right hand and knelt in front of him and mocked him. "Hail, king of the Jews!" they said. <sup>30</sup> They spit on him, and took the staff and struck him on the head again and again. <sup>31</sup> After they had mocked him, they took off the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.

**Luke 23:33-37** When they came to the place called the Skull, there they crucified him, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left. <sup>34</sup> Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." And they divided up his clothes by casting lots. <sup>35</sup> The people stood watching, and the rulers even sneered at him. They said, "He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Christ of God, the Chosen One." <sup>36</sup> The soldiers also came up and mocked him. They offered him wine vinegar <sup>37</sup> and said, "If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself."

a.) How does Jesus' forgiveness for his tormentors help you when it comes to helping the hurting?

b.) How can Jesus' forgiveness toward his tormentors help someone who has been a victim of a crime and now sees someone coming to their congregation who carried out a similar crime?

4.) Read the following three Scripture sections that help us see why we as a congregation want to help the hurting.

**Acts 10:34-35** Then Peter began to speak: "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right."

**Galatians 3:26-28** You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, <sup>27</sup> for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. <sup>28</sup> There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

**Matthew 18:1-5** At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" <sup>2</sup> He called a little child and had him stand among them. <sup>3</sup> And he said: "I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the

kingdom of heaven. <sup>4</sup> Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. <sup>5</sup> And whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me.”

a.) How do you think these passages would look from the viewpoint of the hurting?

b.) How would you finish this sentence?

“We want to help the hurting by communicating and showing to them that they are part of our congregation because \_\_\_\_\_.”

5.) Jesus notices what his people do when they put their faith into action. In Matthew 25, Jesus tells us about what will take place on the last day when he comes back as our king and judge. How do these Bible verses help us understand why we want to help those who are hurting?

**Matthew 25:34-36, 40** “Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. <sup>35</sup> For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, <sup>36</sup> I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’ ... <sup>40</sup> The King will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.’”

## BRINGING IT HOME

6.) What can we do to help our congregation improve awareness of why we help the hurting?

7.) After what we’ve studied in this lesson, what is our why? What are three reasons you would give the hurting person who asks, “Why do you want to help me?”

## CLOSING PRAYER