

Taking The Path: “Help People”

Reconnect – September 19, 2010



Text: I John 4:7-19; Luke 6:31-36

Key Thought: Helping people is one of the clearest ways to show God’s love in and through our lives.

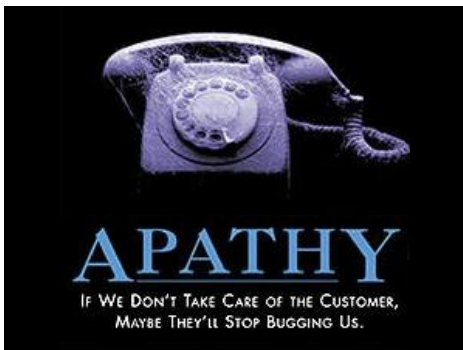
God is love, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them. And as we live in God, our love grows more perfect. So we will not be afraid on the day of judgment, but we can face him with confidence because we live like Jesus here in this world... I John 4:9-17, NLT

Pre-Intro: “Customer Service” (Chuck S02E09)

Intro: A life of customer service

- I love that show, and I laughed when I saw that episode, because it’s probably a fantasy at one time or another of everyone who works in customer service
- When you get measured multiple times a year by mystery shoppers, feedback surveys, performance reviews and comment cards, not to mention dirty looks, sighs and grunts, well, you must work in front-line customer service (and it’s probably worse by phone)

Q: Anyone have any really good (meaning really BAD) customer service stories? Where you’re either the customer or the employee?



- I’ve been interviewing people this week for a position at the Bank, and it’s in... yep, you guessed it, customer service
- Truthfully, customer service jobs are not always what people choose, but often it’s what they find themselves stuck with or what they wind up with – they are some of the lower paying jobs, entry level jobs, jobs that you generally get promoted OUT of, rather than get promoted IN to
- Imagine a company that actually started you out NOT working with the public, and then determined that yes, you were indeed good enough to work with the public, so they would promote you to where

you would have interactions on their behalf with people – that those who were in customer service would be better paid than those who didn't deal with the public directly

- Too often – maybe ALL the time – it's the exact opposite, isn't it? You dream of the day that you will make a manager position high enough that you won't have to serve the grumpy person with the bad breath, or the person who keeps on talking and talking and talking when you're really busy, or the person who has screaming kids tearing through the store, destroying the display that you just spent so much time on, while you smile, smile, smile
- And there's probably no super-big-screen TV waiting for you – or even a picture next to the Founder(!)

You can't choose your customers, only your response to them

- In customer service you generally can't choose your customers, the people who come through your doors, the people who are next in line, stepping up to see you about what they need or the problem that they have
- But there are those people who look back on their resumes and see a pattern of customer service, and it winds up being something that they seek out, that they enjoy doing – the challenge of dealing with people, those you meet, the satisfaction you get from meeting needs of people
- People that consistently want to help people, that they don't know – and maybe even moreso, that they DO know, but that they can't pick and choose from, is rare, because it's so hard
- How do you do it when you're having a bad day?
- How do you do it when you're not treated with respect?
- How do you do it when they have needs that you just can't meet?
- How do you do it when it takes away from the rest of your life and your priorities?
- How do you do it when it means that your own life will be more difficult as a result?
- How do you do it when it involves sacrifice, and the other person may not even realize it
- How do you continue to help people, even if you have to go around others to do it?

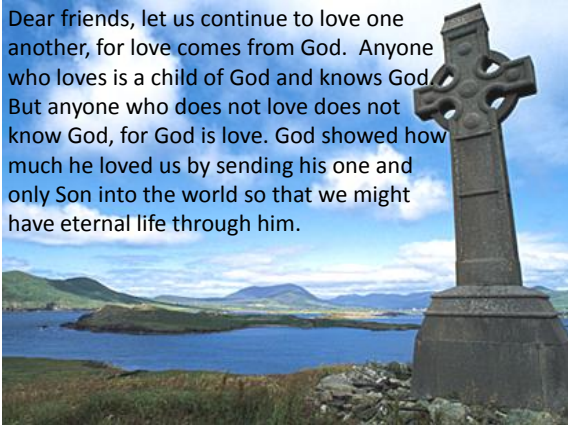
And what if it's not your job, but your life?

- When you start to talk like that, it sounds less like a customer service job you had in college and more like a life trying to be lived according to the example of Jesus
- Last week in the first part of our series, "Love God", we looked at a section of the Bible found in one of John's letters to his churches – John, the close follower of Jesus and his best friend
- I wanted to look at roughly the same section this morning, but I've swapped some parts in and out – you can find the whole thing in I John 4:

Read Text: I John 4:7-19, NLT

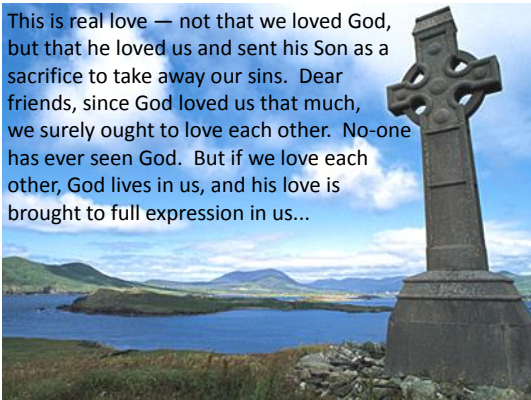
Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God. But anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love. God showed how much he loved us by sending his one and only Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through him. This is real love — not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins.

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Dear friends, since God loved us that much, we surely ought to love each other. No one has ever seen God. But if we love each other, God lives in us, and his love is brought to full expression in us...

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“Self”ishness – aka “looking out for #1”

- As people we are capable of so much good – of heroism, of doing the right thing in the face of pain and threat and fear and intimidation
- But let’s face it – much of the time we’re not necessarily the best advertisements for humanity
- In any kind of interactions with people, we fight to overcome what is so fundamental to our own nature: our prioritizing of ourselves over everything else
- Our “self”ishness – self-preservation, protection, our own good, the will to live and prosper and succeed, combined with our many responsibilities, our busy schedule, and the egg management fee
- But we do the best we can, until something happens to shake us up, and then we sometimes give some thought to the sort of person we are or the life that we’re living (are they the same?)

III – story of the motorcycle passenger killed on the 401 about a month ago



- about a month ago there was a horrifying news story – of a woman killed on the 401 just outside Toronto
- She had been a passenger on a motorcycle that had been racing and weaving in and out of traffic – and when a police cruiser gave chase, instead of slowing down and pulling over, the driver had sped up to try to escape
- But the passenger hadn't been able to hold on during that series of manoeuvres and she was thrown from the bike, only to be run over multiple times by rush hour traffic, much of which had no idea that she was there, bumper to bumper as it is
- The tag line of the evening news was that no-one had stopped to help – but really, most didn't know or understand all of what was going on, being that they were doing 100km/hr + themselves

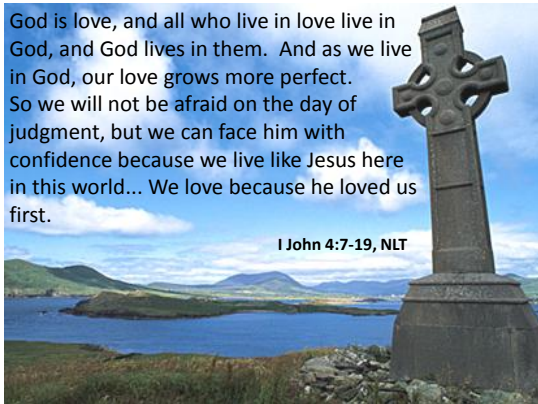
<http://cnews.canoe.ca/CNEWS/Canada/2010/08/30/15184061.html>

- So they finally ID'd the victim, and caught who they think was the driver – but that information is a lot harder to find than “no-one cared enough to stop”
- This, because we're Canada – we rank number three, according to a recent survey in the National Post, in generosity in the world – a survey that found that “being happy is a great impulse for people give their time and money to charity than being rich” – we were only beaten by Australia and New Zealand, because they see the world upside down to start with – they looked at giving cash for charity, volunteered time or helped a stranger, and then they were asked questions to try to get an idea of how happy they were (**National Post September 9, 2010 A7**)



- So we have high standards – we just fail to live up to them sometimes
- Sometimes, it's in what we do, and other times, it's in what we don't do, and at other times, it's in who we will help or won't help

God is love, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them. And as we live in God, our love grows more perfect. So we will not be afraid on the day of judgment, but we can face him with confidence because we live like Jesus here in this world... We love because he loved us first. (1 John 4:7-19)



Living like Jesus in the world...

Q: Tell me – how DID Jesus live? Especially in terms of his interactions with people as far as we know them? (told the truth, helped people with their needs, forgave them, taught them, listened to them, valued them, treated them well, etc.)

- it seems to me that He was connected to God, connected to people, and that He lived with a greater purpose and goal than anyone else around him – He was definitely moving towards an end result
- He has these interactions with people, and they end up helped – and he doesn't treat them the same way each time by any means – very differently, and yet each time it's what they need

What does “help” look like?

Q: What do people need help with? What kind of help do people need, and maybe not even know it?

Q: What is the greatest thing that someone could do for someone else? The greatest thing that one person could do for another? (take answers)

Q: What is the greatest thing that someone has ever done for you?

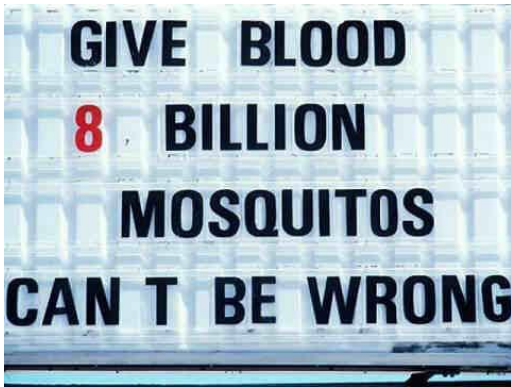
- benefit from your experience
- honesty/truth
- teach them something or teach them how to do something for themselves (not just give them something)
- support them financially / share their wealth with them
- save their life
- keep you from making a big mistake
- introduce you to someone incredible / something really good for you
- reminded you of something you already knew but were ready to throw away

Q: Who has helped you, at a crucial point in your life? Who stepped up to help you, what connection did they have with you, and how did they help you?

Q: Have you been able to pass it on? Who would you say that you are helping right now?

“Blood – it’s in you to give”

- What’s in YOU to give? What do you have that you could be sharing with others or giving to others? Expertise? Experience? Resources? Perspective? Wisdom? Friendship? Forgiveness?



“The dog ate my... compassion” (roadblocks to community)



- “**donor fatigue**” – when people are asked over and over again to give and give and give, and we start to think, “Well, who is helping me, and where does it end?”
- Especially in an age where government is supposed to do it all, but then doesn’t and looks for our money in donations as well as taxes – crazy!
- Disasters all over the world, not to mention the problems of lack of food, clean water, diseases, shelter that the world has been struggling with for thousands of years, that we can’t seem to solve with all of our money and technology and 21century smarts
- And then there’s **insulation**, as well – where if you don’t ask questions, you may not realize the great needs that might be all around you
- I was at a yacht club yesterday – and they didn’t throw me out as a non-member, because I was doing a wedding there
- Beautiful spot, well-situated, smelled like money – lots of regulars sitting there when you walk in, really nice clubhouse, everyone seems quite contented – except no-one will talk to you or really help you find what you might be looking for – unless, of course, you’re in the club or can afford to join
- I also think about our **own needs** – where we are convinced in the back of our minds that there is only so much to go around, and it’s our job to ensure that we get ours
- It’s easier to offer cookies to people when you’ve already had three, and you know where the next bag is for you to open – but it’s much harder when it’s your last cookie, and you REALLY wanted it

- Our culture's take on a situation like that is, "Look after yourself, because no-one else will – don't put yourself in a situation where you have to rely on someone else" – at least, that's what you think if you're "responsible"
- Otherwise, you might not care because mooching off people is your lifestyle – you're a taker, not a giver, a receiver and never a giver of help
- We need to learn to trust God in order to really help people – to see that God is responsible in large part for what we already have, and our future earning potential, and that if we give, that God will "make it up to us"

Q: What is it easiest for you to give? And how is it hardest for you to help? What's your "sticking point"? And why is that, anyway?

Q: When is it easiest for you to give? What kinds of things? OR, what kinds of things do you REFUSE to give to, no way, no how? What sorts of things WON'T you help with, and why?

The family and friends plan...

- it's one thing to help our family – it's expected, you're no hero for it – depending of course on your family, but for someone to NOT help family is strange, not the opposite
- it's another thing to help friends – to be the person who is the go-to one, the person who can always be counted on to help – but again, it's your friends – you're helping those who help you
- Being a giver versus being a taker – but there is a rhythm to the whole thing – if you're always a giver and never a receiver, then you have power and control issues – if no-one else can ever do anything for you, what are you afraid of? Making them feel good by letting them do something for you? Joining the human race? Demonstrating that you're human? During his three years on tour, Jesus and his entourage were looked after in large part by some wealthy women, and he had no problem with that, even though He was God and gold is like pavement for Him
- you can't always just be a giver – and you can't always just be a receiver, because that makes you a taker – so lean towards the giving side, but learn how to graciously accept the help of others and just say "thank you"

Key Thought:

Helping people is one of the clearest ways to show God's love in and through our lives.

Do to others as you would like them to do to you... Love your enemies! Do good to them. Lend to them without expecting to be repaid. Then your reward from heaven will be very great, and you will truly be acting as children of the Most High, for he is kind to those who are unthankful and wicked. You must be compassionate, just as your Father is compassionate.

– Jesus (Luke 6:31-36, NLT)

TAKE IT HOME:

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Conclusion: love God, help people... _____

- Touch on next week – the “building community” part, and how we will be living it out next week – the willingness to welcome people, invite people into what we have – to expand our community, to invite people to be in relationship with us and with others and with God, as opposed to deciding that there are enough people in our lives – we will be living it out
- we live in a world where we rub shoulders with people but we don't know them, and we're content to build our community through screens, or to put it aside for the sake of our TV sets (either to have community through our screens OR just have the screens instead)

