

The Disciples

Jesus captured the attention and respect of men, women, and children by serving their needs. If you want to pass on faith to people in your home or circle of contacts, serving them is a great place to begin.

Luke 5:1-11 (NIV) One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret, with the people crowding around him and listening to the word of God, he saw at the water's edge two boats, left there by the fishermen, who were washing their nets. He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from shore. Then he sat down and taught the people from the boat. When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch." Simon answered, "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets." When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them, and they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink. When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!" For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken, and so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Simon's partners. Then Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will catch men." So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him.

Luke 8:1-3 (NIV) After this, Jesus traveled about from one town and village to another, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. The Twelve were with him, and also some women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases: Mary (called Magdalene) from whom seven demons had come out; Joanna the wife of Cuza, the manager of Herod's household; Susanna; and many others. These women were helping to support them out of their own means.

Reflections

Family Service

"It is too easy for young people who grow up in churches with active youth mission programs to learn that Christian service is something teenagers do, something like proms and student government, and that they can expect to grow out of it... At least part of the formula for teenagers' becoming proactive in serving is to allow our youth to see Christian adults living out their faith through service as well. Since parents are the primary faith-shapers for their children, any [service] activities will be strengthened by involving parents."¹

Mark DeVries points out the importance of youth learning to serve others out of their resources and faith by experiencing such serving at the hands of those they trust, both parents and other adults in the faith community.

Yet, such serving by parents & other significant adults is not enough—they also need faith. One study explored what factors influenced youth to engage

in mission and service, meaning "often or sometimes participated in projects to help other people (i.e., hungry people, poor people, elderly people, handicapped people)." This study found that 34% of the children of parents who never expressed faith were engaged in mission and service, in contrast to 72% of the children of parents who often expressed faith.²

Faith produces serving. In today's text, Jesus meets Simon Peter when he climbs into his boat on the shore in order to preach to the crowds. After he speaks, Jesus talks fishing with Peter and then Peter experiences the power of Jesus when he finds his nets overflowing with fish. Jesus tells an amazed Peter that Peter will now be fishing for people, which he did as a prominent leader of the early Christian church. Jesus also healed many people, including Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Susanna, and other women. These women expressed their faith in Christ by providing for Jesus and his disciples out of their own resources.

Taking faith home means serving others

in real ways. Martin Luther stated it this way: *"A faith without love is not enough—rather it is not faith but a counterfeit faith. Faith is a living, busy, active, mighty thing. It is impossible for it not to do good works incessantly. Hence, a person is ready and glad to do good to everyone, to serve everyone, to suffer everything in love and praise of God."*³

Many of our youth today experience service as a requirement for graduation and/or as gold star on their resume. Instead, show them that serving is a matter of the heart and an act of faith in Jesus Christ.

—Pastor Mike McQuaid

¹ Mark DeVries, *Family-Based Youth Ministry*, (Downers Grove, Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 1994), 180.

² Merton P. Strommen and Richard A. Hardel, *Passing on the Faith: A Radical New Model for Youth and Family Ministry* (Winona, Minnesota: Saint Mary's Press, 2000), 99.

³ *Ibid.*, 79.

Readings

Sunday, January 24

Luke 5:1-11; Luke 8:1-3

How did Jesus serve others in these passages? In doing so, how did he mentor his disciples? How do you serve others? Who is influenced by your acts of service?

Monday, January 25

2 Timothy 1:5-7

Paul saw faith in Timothy that was passed on to him by women in two generations before him. Who passed faith onto you? To whom can you pass it? Which spirit mentioned by Paul tends to dominate you? In what venue of serving might you “rekindle the gift of God”?

Tuesday, January 26

Ephesians 2:8-10

How does the opening of this paragraph (Ephesians 2:1-7) give a deeper understanding of the profound good news that God saved us in Christ and created us to do good works?

Wednesday, January 27

Matthew 25:31-49

What good works are named in this passage? In which one of these ways do you tend to express your faith? Who could you involve in this expression of your faith? How might it be time to address a different need as a way of “rekindling the gift of God” (2 Timothy 1:5-7)?

Thursday, January 28

Matthew 20:20-28

With which person in this story do you relate? Why? What did Jesus come to do? What does he call his followers to do?

Friday, January 29

Matthew 5:13-16

Who are you making thirsty for Christ? Why do you do good works?

Saturday, January 30

Philippians 2:1-11

The “you” in verse 5 is plural – Paul was addressing all the Christians gathered in Philippi. In the groups in which you live (home, work, church, community groups, school, sports, etc.), which ones have the mindset described in Philippians 2? How do you contribute a Christ-like mindset, as described here?

Don't have a Bible? Access these scriptures at biblegateway.com.