



Sent by God: His People on His Mission

LESSON 10: Values--Touch

Our Values

Six values guide this church and give us identity. These reflect our mission and shape us as a church. Here is summary for your reference.

Truth. We value truth, we value biblical teaching. This commitment calls us to be *approved workers*.

Unity. We value unity, we seek peaceful harmony. We seek unity in God's Spirit as *spiritual brothers*.

Touch. God's presence touches, loves and cares. God touches our world through us, his *ambassadors*. We value caring evangelism.

Christian Living. To live like Jesus acknowledges that he calls us to be like him, his *disciples*.

Love. Our desire to love like Jesus shows in all our relationships, but especially in our commitment to be the *family of God*.

Ministry. We want to equip and empower one another, recognizing that all are called to be *servants*.

Our Example: A Servant Lord Who Touches Lives

One of my favorite concepts in the Gospel of Mark is how Mark portrays Jesus' love and care by describing him as a person who uses personal touch to change lives.

In the same way that Jesus came touching the lives of others, he calls us to go forth with a personal touch that communicates God's presence in this world. A TLC church touches, loves, and cares.

Suggestion for personal study: Use a concordance to find the "touching stories" of Jesus' ministry.

Touch

Because Jesus came as the Lord who touches lives, we value touch. We seek opportunities to touch others' lives and make a difference. Touch requires that we become involved. When we commit ourselves to touch the hurts of our world, we are able to respond to needs as Jesus did. Because we want

to touch others as Jesus did, we seek to help with physical needs. But we always have in view the greatest need--the eternal need that surpasses every experience in this world. Our commitment to help others with the needs of life guides our evangelism and mission efforts. In the highest expression of our commitment to touch the lives of others, we value caring evangelism.

While caring evangelism is important to us, we do not believe God sends us forth only to tell. He sends us forth also to touch lives and change hearts. He calls us to touch and teach in order to transform people. The only kind of telling that matters is telling that reflects the caring heart of God.

We have been given these tasks by Jesus himself. He sends us forth as ambassadors, as though God is making his appeal to the world through us. Because we are Christ's ambassadors, he has given us both a message and a ministry. The message and ministry both focus on reconciliation. The reason we go forth to touch others as God has touched us, is that God wants the world to be reconciled to him in Christ.

Touching Lives, Transforming Hearts

Our commitment to caring evangelism means that we must go about the task in God's way. God does not manipulate, God does not coerce. God demonstrates his love and extends his grace in the hope that human beings will respond in kind, becoming like him. The touch that has transformed us is the touch we seek to share with those around us.

Therefore, we tell the story of how God has touched us again and again. We do not tell the story to call attention to ourselves; we tell the story because it is ultimately a story of God's touch, God's transforming power, and God's grace.

Discussion Questions

Note: Discussing shared values, or understandings of those values, is never an easy thing. Seek God's guidance in prayer, seek his wisdom and seek his unifying Spirit as the class works through these discussion questions.

What does it mean to say that we value touch? Do we value all kinds of touch? What kinds of touch are most valuable?

Who are some of the people Jesus touched in his ministry? What are the characteristics of a loving touch? (Think of the attitudes and actions of Jesus in the stories in which he touched someone.)

What comes to your mind when we say that we value "caring evangelism"? Is there any other kind? Describe some of the evangelistic efforts you have seen that did not seem all that caring.

How do we accurately communicate to our community and our world the heart of Jesus described in this lesson?

What are the strengths and weaknesses of these mottos?

- Touching Lives, Transforming Hearts
- A TLC church—touching, loving, caring
- A church for belonging, sharing, and caring

Read 2 Corinthians 5:11-21.

How does the love of Christ compel us?

How important is the promise of new creation to people in our world today?

Do people need reconciliation? Do they know they need it?

Do people want reconciliation? Why or why not?

Evaluate the message we share in classes, sermons, and other ways. Do you think we share a message of reconciliation? Are the ministries of this church focused on reconciliation?

What might we do different to improve?

Discuss the poem, "The Touch of the Master's Hand".

Notes

'Twas battered and scarred, and the auctioneer thought it scarcely worth his while to waste much time on the old violin, but held it up with a smile; "What am I bidden, good folks," he cried, "Who'll start the bidding for me?" "A dollar, a dollar"; then two!" "Only two? Two dollars, and who'll make it three? Three dollars, once; three dollars twice; going for three." But no, from the room, far back, a gray-haired man came forward and picked up the bow; Then, wiping the dust from the old violin, and tightening the loose strings, he played a melody pure and sweet as caroling angel sings.

The music ceased, and the auctioneer, with a voice that was quiet and low, said; "What am I bid for the old violin?" And he held it up with the bow. A thousand dollars, and who'll make it two? Two thousand! And who'll make it three? Three thousand, once, three thousand, twice, and going and gone," said he. The people cheered, but some of them cried, "We do not quite understand what changed its worth." Swift came the reply: "The touch of a master's hand."

And many a man with life out of tune, and battered and scarred with sin, Is auctioned cheap to the thoughtless crowd, much like the old violin, A "mess of pottage," a glass of wine; a game - and he travels on. "He is going" once, and "going twice, He's going and almost gone." But the Master comes, and the foolish crowd never can quite understand the worth of a soul and the change that's wrought by the touch of the Master's hand. Myra 'Brooks' Welch

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