



THE EXECUTIVE WELFARE COUNCIL OF THE AFM OF SA (AFM Welfare)

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AFM WELFARE WEEKEND

Sunday Sermon Points:

Introduction

Feeling vulnerable and needing the help of other people is something that we all dislike, but all of us have experienced it in some shape or form.

Can you remember how it feels when you are too sick to take care of yourself or you are in such a crisis of some sort that someone else must come and assist you?

There are so many vulnerable children and older people and women in our communities. May the Lord Jesus give us His perspective on these matters today.

Point 1: Jesus Christ

Much about Jesus Christ is also about the vulnerability of the human race!

Let's consider this passage in Mark 6:

34 When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So, he began teaching them many things.

35 By this time it was late in the day, so his disciples came to him. "This is a remote place," they said, "and it's already very late.

36 Send the people away so that they can go to the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat."

37 But he answered, "You give them something to eat."

It was very clear that Jesus had compassion on people, simply feeling their pain as though it was His own. The disciples had concern for the people, so they did see the pain but they were not able or maybe willing to get involved.

The words of Jesus to his disciples still challenge us today: v 37 "You give them something to eat!" Maybe you can identify with their excuses about the fact that they did not have the resources, but Jesus shows us here, that He only wants the willingness to begin to act with compassion.

The miracle took place in the hands of the disciples! May we as a church experience such miracles as we move from concern to compassion and allow the love of Christ to compel us into action for the sake of those who are suffering!

Point 2: You and me

Every believer often asks the question, how can I make a difference? It is in our DNA because we were created in the image of a compassionate God!

2 Corinthians 1 will give us some guidance in this regard:

3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort,

4 who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.

There is so much HOPE in this scripture because it shows how our troubles and trials become an opportunity for the God of comfort to also raise us up as instruments of compassion and comfort. God's purpose often lies on the other side of suffering!

If the Bible describes our Father as the God of comfort and the God of compassion then by implication we, as His children, are also designed to live with compassion and to comfort others.

Many people live for their own joy and satisfaction and success to be happy in life, but the scriptures show us here that true happiness is to build on your own joy by investing in the joy of other people!

Acts 20:35 states that "In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive'"

The Bible is calling us today to a life of fulfilment and deep joy and happiness, it is when we begin to live beyond ourselves that we experience the love of Christ, who love so much that He gave of Himself!

Point 3: Practical Next Steps

In the story of Mark 6, we find the simple picture of a little boy with 5 loaves and 2 fish. That is how compassion starts, asking yourselves, what do I have in my hands?

Some of us can just sit and listen to the pain of others.

Some of us can do more and encourage and even counsel them.

Others can do practical work like fixing something in the house of a retired person.

Others can serve with their profession including hair, nails or even medical needs.

Some of us can bring finances to empower the work of the church towards the vulnerable.

And lastly, some of you are good organizers who can hold projects together.

Conclusion

May the heart of our Lord Jesus Christ and the creativity of the Holy Spirit spark such a movement of compassion that our nation will take note of the living Jesus Christ who is alive in His church!!!

Past. Jean Symons (Vice-Chairperson: Executive Welfare Board)