

Preach, Teach & Reach: Mark 2:15-17

Jesus' mode of teaching and ministry was totally different from that of anyone else. After a session of teaching, the people were astonished by how he taught. "For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes (Matt 7:28, 29)." As he constantly reached out to the needy, destitute, and the outcast of the society, the religious elite frowned at him, for he stepped out of the boundaries that the religious gurus of his time had set. Being dubbed "the friend of the sinners and tax collectors" did not intimidate him in any way, as he clarifies his mission on the earth: "it is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous but sinners".

Jesus was very clear about his purpose and quite often you could find him associating with the neglected members of society. He treated them as they were important because he realized that they were precious to God. He took the time to connect with people who didn't seem like His kind. By showing love, compassion, grace and mercy, he mirrored the heart of his heavenly Father. He didn't care what the religious scholars thought about him; neither was he ever intimidated by the popularity polls of his day. He only cared about what his Father thought. How we ought to emulate him in our everyday life as well as in our ministry! As we constantly interact with people in our society, how often we come across people who are shunned, ignored and ostracized. If we can take a step towards them and make them feel loved and appreciated, we might be effective in reaching out to them with the love of God. They in turn can see the love of God radiating through our lives, as we attempt to walk in the footsteps of our Master.

If we are not cautious, we can be lead into thinking that being a saved person makes us better than anyone else. Like the old time preacher D.L.Moody used to say "So heavenly minded that we become no earthly good." We start to live the high life with the Lord, and we start looking down on the lost. How often we feel that we are among the elite and shun our God given responsibility to reach out to the lost in love? Jesus knew his status, but he did not allow that to get in the way of serving others. If we want to be like Christ we must be willing to

lay aside our egos and reach out to all members of society. From time to time it is healthy to have introspection; a reality check into our motives for witnessing and doing anything for the Lord. When we witness to others, do we really want them to have a relationship with Christ and experience the kind of life the Lord has promised, or are we playing the number game? I am always amazed as I read the scripture and see the Master and his disciples were people who impacted the multitude, but did not underestimate the importance of a single lonely lost soul. Regardless of the status of the person in the society (the demon possessed man in the tombs, the elite eunuch on the royal chariot or the crippled man at the gate called Beautiful). To God everyone is important, let us pray that we will catch the same kind of vision.

God wants all of us to be consistent in our endeavor to reach out to the lost. Our passion for lost souls should not be confined to certain seasons of the year; neither should they be propelled by programs. We cannot act as if we genuinely care about certain individuals today and just totally ignore them the next day. Serving the outcast of the society was Jesus' way of life, not a mission project he indulged in once in a while. If we are serious about our call and mission in life, we must follow in his footsteps, emulate his character and make reaching out to the lost a way of life.