

Jesus' Concern For Others

Joe Slater

Paul's words in Philippians 2:4 reflect the life and teaching of Jesus: *"Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others."* If you ignore your own interests, you will have no means to help others; but focusing entirely on self eliminates any attention to anyone else.

Jesus and the disciples ate, drank, and slept like all people. They had a treasury to supply day-to-day needs (John 13:29). But Jesus was also others-oriented. Most things He did as recorded in the New Testament were for the benefit of others.

Think of the incarnation. An old favorite hymn asks, "Why did My Savior come to earth?" Indeed, why would He leave the glory of Heaven, where He was loved and adored, to come to this sinful world where He knew rejection, hatred, torture, and death awaited Him? Let our Lord Himself answer: *"The Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost"* (Luke 19:10). *"For the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many"* (Mark 10:45). Paul summarized it this way: *"For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you though His poverty might become rich"* (2 Corinthians 8:9).

Not for His own benefit, but for ours He, being eternal Deity, condescended to take upon Himself human flesh. He humbly served, obeying the Father's will, even to the point of the death of the cross where He took our sins upon Himself and paid the atonement price. Let there be no doubt – Jesus cared for others! (More next week!)

A BOX FULL OF BUTTONS

My cousin Christie's husband gave her a box of used buttons. The following are her thoughts about the box full of buttons. Christie writes...

"I see so many things when I look at these buttons. First and foremost, I think of my sweetheart who thought of me when he came across them. He knew I'd love them. He knew I'd be as proud of them, as if they were silver or gold. They were a wonderful surprise and I've already spent a great amount of time looking over them. I could never pick one favorite. Each one, beautiful in its own way. Thank you Mr. Poole, for thinking of me.

"I think about what the clothes must have looked like from which they came. No doubt, some from women's dresses, baby clothes, and men's shirts. Where did they go, what did they see? Did the lady wearing these buttons stand in front of a wood cook stove 3 times a day? Did a little one take her first steps in a dress adorned with those? Someone took the time to remove them from their garments before disposing of them. Some of these buttons are so old, they started to crumble when handled. Some are as strong as when they were made. Some are worn and scratched. Others are shiny and bright. Many are soiled and need a little TLC. Some are still carrying the thread that attached them to the garment.

"This got me to thinking. Aren't we a lot like these buttons? All so very different. Some of us needing just a little TLC so we can shine again. Others looking bright as a new dime. Some of us are bound by threads we just can't seem to get free from. Oh, but God! He can cut those threads away. Like an old button, he can clean us up and give us purpose again. He can see the beauty in each individual, no matter the flaws. I'm thankful for His grace and love because I fall short every day. I'm glad to know He loves me, just as I am."

– Christie Launius Poole (via Jay Launius, Maud, TX)

Planting Corn And Expecting Wheat

Imagine if a farmer planted an entire field of corn. He then spent several months fertilizing, watering, and keeping the weeds out of the field. When the stalks were fully grown, he went out to the field, plucked and peeled back the husk on an ear of corn, then stormed back to the house and angrily tossed the ear of corn onto the kitchen table. His wife asked, "What's wrong with you?" Raising his eyebrows, he said, "You know I wanted wheat, but this is corn!" Confused, the wife asked, "But didn't you plant corn?" Disgusted, the farmer replied, "What's that got to do with anything? I really wanted wheat, but all I can get out of that field is corn!"

Obviously this scenario is ridiculous, but how often do we do the same thing in our spiritual lives? Specifically, I've seen people do this in their relationships. They want deep, strong, meaningful relationships, but they aren't sowing what is necessary to reap good relationships.

When you sow jealousy, bitterness, gossip, and such like, you shouldn't be shocked when the harvest you reap isn't good relationships. If you want to have good relationships, you have to work hard at planting the right things such as patience, kindness, and selflessness. In addition, you have to make sure you're not planting seeds of envy, boastfulness, arrogance, rudeness, irritability or resentment (see 1 Corinthians 13:4-6).

We see the same principle throughout Scripture and in our lives: "Whatever one sows, that will he also reap" (Galatians 6:7).

--Wes McAdams (via *Old Paths*)

If you "buried a talent" like the unfaithful servant did in the parable, there's still time to uncover it, put it to good use for the Lord, and hear the words, "Well done!" (Matthew 25:14-30).

--Jon Warnes, via Facebook