

## **“WELCOME SUNDAY”**

### ***“Go and Do Likewise”*** **Scripture Reading – Luke, 10:25-37**

*On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher”, he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?” “What is written in the Law?” he replied. “How do you read it?” He answered: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind’; and, ‘Love your neighbour as yourself’.” “You have answered correctly”, Jesus replied. “Do this and you will live”. But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbour?”*

*In reply Jesus said: “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half-dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he travelled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. ‘Look after him’, he said, ‘and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have’.*

*“Which of these three do you think was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?” asked Jesus. The expert in the law replied, “The one who had mercy on him”. Jesus told him, “Go and do likewise”.*

***‘We urge you, brothers, warn those who are idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone.’***

***I Thessalonians, 5:14, NIV***

**This sermon has been written for the occasion of Welcome Sunday 2006.**

Major David Ellison has been appointed as the Commanding Officer to the Malton Corps.

This sermon was written for his Welcome and Installation Service.

**For our last United Corps Worship, we looked at: ‘EVERYBODY IS SOME BODY IN HIS BODY’.**

In recent years, Christians have rediscovered the Biblical teaching of Paul that pictures the Church as ‘THE BODY OF CHRIST’. This is a scriptural concept, though it does not define all that is involved in the ministry of the local church, since there are other pictures of the church besides that of the body. The Body of Christ refers to the ministry of each Christian to the others, just as the various members of the human body minister to one another in order to maintain physical health and life.

***‘The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ.’***

***I Corinthians, 12:12, NIV***

**Christian family members must learn to minister to each other.**

The older members have a task to teach the younger members and encourage them when they are in difficulty. The spiritual leaders in the church are supposed to equip the individual members to do the work of the ministry. In most churches, the members pay the leaders to do the work of the ministry, but the leaders cannot do it all. Consequently, the work begins to weaken and die, and whilst everybody blames the preacher, the body of Christ becomes sick and unhealthy.

*Paul named three special family members who need personal help, but the reality is that at one time or another, we can see ourselves in the people he describes...*

#### **“GO AND DO LIKEWISE”**

Pete Guzzo, the Executive Director of the Special Olympics staff in Washington from 1980 to 1986, was an employee of the Seattle Park and Recreation Department, when he escorted a group of athletes from Seattle to Spokane for a track and field meeting in 1976. He verifies that the story of what took place there is true, and that it touched everyone who witnessed it.

*‘Eight contestants, all with physical or mental disabilities, assembled at the starting line for the highlight of the athletics meeting, the 100 yard race. At the gun, they all started out, not exactly in a dash, but with a relish to run the race to the finish and win. All, that is, except one little boy, who stumbled on the asphalt, tumbled over a couple of times, and began to cry. The other seven athletes heard the boy cry. Without anyone speaking, they slowed down and looked back. Then they instinctively all turned around and went back, every one of them. One girl, diagnosed with Down’s Syndrome, bent down and kissed the fallen athlete and said, “This will make it better”. Then all eight linked arms and walked together to the finish line.*

*‘Everyone in the stadium stood, and the cheering went on for several minutes. People who were there (in Spokane, Washington State, United States of America in 1976) are still telling the story. Why? Because deep down we know this one thing: What matters in this life is more than winning for ourselves. What truly matters in this life is helping others win, even if it means slowing down and changing our course.’*

**Surely this story is a picture of how God sees the ministry within the Church?**

But, in a horse race, when one competitor goes down injured and lame, what happens? Then screens are placed around the stricken creature so that the watching crowds cannot see the unfolding of events. Whilst the crowd cannot see it, they hear the gunshots ring out as the trainer shoot the fallen competitor.

*Someone has once ironically observed:*

***“THE CHURCH IS THE ONLY ARMY THAT SHOOTS ITS WOUNDED”***

## Have you ever been wounded?

Have you ever wondered how you can and should minister to those who have been wounded?

Consider I Thessalonians, 5:14...

**CEV** *My friends, we beg you to warn anyone who isn't living right. Encourage anyone who feels left out, help all who are weak, and be patient with everyone.*

**NAB** *We urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, cheer the fainthearted, support the weak, be patient with all.*

**NKJV** *We exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all.*

**NLT** *Brothers and sisters, we urge you to warn those who are lazy. Encourage those who are timid. Take tender care of those who are weak. Be patient with everyone.*

**NRSV** *We urge you, beloved, to admonish the idlers, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with all of them.*

**TLB** *Dear brothers, warn those who are lazy, comfort those who are frightened, take tender care of those who are weak, and be patient with everyone.*

*Going back to our story of the race, what did the other seven athletes see as they looked into the eyes of the crying boy?*

### DID THEY SEE ANGER?

Perhaps the boy did not want to run at all and was pushed into this race at the insistence of his parents and others. They made him do it, but he did not run because he thought that some thing like this would happen.

*When you look into people's eyes and see anger, it is a reminder that many people are hard-hearted, won't do people. They are what the Bible calls 'STIFF-NECKED PEOPLE'.*

### DID THEY SEE ANTICIPATION?

Perhaps the boy just needs a hand to help him up and continue in the race. He wanted to run the race for himself, and now that he has fallen, he just needs a helping hand.

*When you look into people's eyes and see anticipation, it is a reminder that many people are faint-hearted, want to people who deeply desire to hear some encouragement.*

### DID THEY SEE AGONY?

Perhaps the boy now has an injury in addition to his original disability.

*When you look into people's eyes and see agony, it is a reminder that many people are broken-hearted, can't do, people who are afraid to be hurt any more.*

*Paul gives us specific instruction as to how we minister to these people...*

***'We urge you, brothers, warn those who are idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone.'***

***I Thessalonians, 5:14, NIV***

## 1. HARD HEARTED, WON'T DO, PEOPLE

<b>'WARN THOSE WHO ARE IDLE... ADMONISH ANYONE WHO IS LAZY, AND ISN'T LIVING RIGHT'</b>
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*Paul was writing to those in the Church at Thessalonica who were no longer engaged in an occupation because they were thoroughly convinced that the return of Jesus was imminent. Therefore, they were sitting around and gazing into the clouds watching for the first glimpse of the returning Messiah. Of course, the Biblical principle is that if a man will not work, he should not eat... but what of those who were dependent upon him for their sustenance.*

**Most translations use the word 'WARN' although some use 'ADMONISH'.**

It comes from the Greek '**NOUTHETEO**' which means 'TO PUT IN MIND, TO CAUTION, TO REBUKE'. The word '**ADMONISH**' literally means 'TO TEACH WITH AN EDGE' or 'TO INSTRUCT WITH A BITE'.

**The Bible gives the example of many people who were admonishers.**

In the Old Testament, for example, we read recently that the captain of the swamped pleasure cruise boat admonished the reluctant prophet Jonah because he was not praying along with all the other members of the crew. My favourite story is how the prophet Nathan admonished the murderous King David, not with sternness but with a story that cut through David's defences straight into his heart.

**When people just will not do right, they are acting 'out of line'.**

The Greek word '**ATAKTOS**', that we have translated as '**IDLE**', literally means 'CARELESS, INSUBORDINATE, UNRULY'. This word was applied to a soldier who would not keep rank but insisted on marching his own way. While the loving atmosphere of the family encourages individual development, there are some things we all must do in the same way. If we do not have rules and standards in the family, we have chaos. Those who have a 'CARELESS, INSUBORDINATE, UNRULY' attitude in the church family can cause arguments and splits.

**Be continually wary of those who say: 'I will not do that... I do not care if...'**

*These people are like lemmings.... because they attract others to follow in their footsteps.*

*These people are like dominoes... when they fall, they usually take many more with them.*

*These people are like go karts... they need to be surrounded by tyre walls to bounce them back onto the safety of the track.*

***'My brothers, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring him back, remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins.'***

***James, 5:19-20, NIV***

## 2. FAINT HEARTED, WANT TO, PEOPLE

**'ENCOURAGE THE TIMID... COMFORT, CHEER... ENCOURAGE THE FAINT-HEARTED'**

*Paul was writing to those in the Church at Thessalonica who were afraid of being persecuted. At this stage in Church history, Christians faced the very real threat of persecution from Jewish zealots who viewed this new religion as a very dangerous sect. The Roman authorities were also feared because although they allowed Christians to worship freely, they demanded that all people should pay homage to Caesar, declaring the Emperor was God. Christians who did not bow the knee were killed en masse in the Coliseum and through other barbaric acts.*

The Greek 'OLIGOPSUCHOS', translated 'TIMID', means 'LITTLE-SOULED, FAINT-HEARTED'.

Every church family has its share of quitters. They always look on the dark side of things and give up when the going is tough. We are instructed to 'ENCOURAGE' such people. The Greek word is made up of two words: 'PARA' (meaning 'NEAR') and 'MUTHOS' (meaning 'SPEECH'). Instead of scolding the fainthearted from a distance, we must get close to them and speak tenderly. We must teach the fainthearted that the trials of life will help to enlarge them and make them stronger in the faith.

*'God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.'*

**II Timothy, 1:7, NIV**

**What scares you? What is your phobia?**

When you were a child, you may have suffered from ABLUTOPHOBIA (the fear of washing or bathing) and DIDASKALEINOPHOBIA (the fear of going to school). When you came home, you may have suffered from CLINOPHOBIA (the fear of going to bed) because of BOGYPHOBIA (the fear of the bogeyman) and ACHLUOPHOBIA (the fear of darkness).

*Now chances are good that you go to bed without checking your wardrobe or looking under your bed, and you do not go ballistic when the lights are turned off... or do you still...?*

Incidentally, my favourite is HIPPOPOTOMONSTROSESQUIPPEDALIOPHOBIA (the fear of long words)!

**We will often only face our own fears when we are ministering to someone else!**

*'I sought the LORD, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears.'*

**Psalms, 34:19, NIV**

## 3. BROKEN HEARTED, CAN'T DO, PEOPLE

**'HELP THE WEAK... SUPPORT, UPHOLD... TAKE TENDER CARE OF THOSE WHO ARE WEAK'**

*Paul was writing to those in the Church at Thessalonica who were addicted to the pagan worship to which they once belonged. Such pagan worship involved committing sexual acts*

*and gratification with male and female temple prostitutes. (Incidentally, such prostitutes were considered 'holy' – an obvious reference to their role not their character.)*

**There are those in every community who suffer from addiction of various kinds.**

Some people do not want to change or overcome their addiction, but for those that do, they need help. There are people who want to change, want to live victorious lives, want to be overcomers, but they cannot – because their body, or their spirit are broken. Paul literally wrote: '**HOLD FAST TO THE WEAK... DON'T LET THEM FALL**'.

***'Be merciful to those who doubt; snatch others from the fire and save them; to others show mercy, mixed with fear – hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh.'***

**Jude, 1:22-23, NIV**

*'Watch over others as well as yourselves; and give them such help as their various needs require. For instance, (a) Some that are wavering in judgment, staggered by others' or by their own evil reasoning, endeavour more deeply to convince of the truth as it is in Jesus. (b) Some snatch with a swift and strong hand out of the fire of sin and temptation. (c) On others show compassion, in a milder and gentler way; though still with a jealous fear, lest you yourselves be infected with the disease you endeavour to cure. See therefore that, while ye love the sinners, ye retain the utmost abhorrence of their sins, and of any, the least degree of or approach to them.'*

**John Wesley**

**'OF SOME HAVE COMPASSION, MAKING A DIFFERENCE' (KJV)**

*'A little boy lived by the sea, and every day he would go to the shore to pick up starfish and put them back into the ocean. One day, after a hurricane had washed up thousands of starfish, the little boy went out and started picking them up one at a time, placing them carefully back into the water. An elderly man, who was watching him, said to the boy, "Why do you waste your time picking these starfish up? There are so many of them that you cannot possibly make a difference". The little boy picked up another starfish, looked at the old man and replied, "To this one I can make a difference". Then he picked up another one, and said, "To this one I can make a difference"...'*

*Rescue the perishing, care for the dying, snatch them in pity from sin and the grave;*

*Weep o'er the erring one, lift up the fallen, tell them of Jesus, the mighty to save.*

*Rescue the perishing, care for the dying, Jesus is merciful, Jesus will save.*

**Fanny Crosby, SASB 691:1**

**Consider THE PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN (see Luke, 10:25-37).**

The Good Samaritan met both the immediate and the short-term needs of the broken man. The Good Samaritan washed and bandaged the bleeding wounds before taking the foolish robbed and beaten man to a safe place in which to heal. The Good Samaritan left him in the care of another. Someone has insightfully remarked: 'HE DEPARTS, BUT DOES NOT DESERT'. A few days later, the man returns and pays the bill on behalf of his new friend.

Is it possible that there are those who you know who are broken in body, heart and soul, and whilst others have passed them by, are waiting for you to minister to them? Is it possible that you have been ministering to some one, but you are finding that increasingly difficult, but you do not want to let them down? Take from the example of the Good Samaritan.

*‘Jesus told the expert in the law, “Go and do likewise”.’*

**Luke, 10:37b, NIV**

**‘WE BEG YOU , WE EXHORT YOU , WE URGE YOU , MY BROTHERS...  
BE PATIENT WITH EVERYONE’**

Let me introduce you to ‘THE FORMULA THAT CHANGES LIVES’.

GRACE + TRUTH  
TIME

ENCOURAGING + TRUTH TELLING  
PATIENTLY ADMINISTERED

#### BE TRUTHFUL

Eleven times in his letter, Paul writes: ‘YOU KNOW... YOU KNOW... YOU KNOW...’. People need to be told the truth and not told simply what they want to hear. People must discover the truth about themselves, despite it being a painful experience

#### BE PATIENT

It is hopeless trying to get behind someone and kick them in order for them to get a move on. For some, this tactic will undeniably work, but for others, they will become more and more entrenched in their current behaviour. Although it may well take a ‘STEAMROLLER TO CRACK THE NUT’, we must be ‘SLOW SIMMERING, AND NOT QUICK TO BOIL’.

#### BE CAREFUL

Truth telling always carries its own risks and dangers, but do not be too busy with ministering to others that you forget to run the race yourself.

## Application

*‘Dick and Ricky Hoyt, father and son, have competed in an astonishing 928 triathlon events including the iron man triathlon. The iron man triathlon is the most challenging test of mind and body ever devised, incorporating a 2½ mile ocean swim, a 112 mile bicycle ride and a marathon 26.2 mile run, all in succession, within an allotted seventeen hour time frame. That would be an achievement in itself, but Ricky was born with cerebral palsy. To race, he must be pulled, pushed, and carried by his father Dick. Some might say that Ricky does not race at all – that his father does all the work.*

*‘However, millions of TV viewers in the USA saw the Ricky’s role in 1999, when wind, cold, and an equipment failure made progress hard on Ricky, even though his father was the one pedalling the modified tandem bike. Dick knelt down to his son, contorted and trembling*

*in the cold, as the two were still facing many more miles of race on the defective bike. He said to his child belted to the bicycle seat, “Do you want to keep going, Son?” Ricky’s father knew that he would be the one enabling and providing the means to overcome, but Ricky still had to have the heart to finish. Ricky looked up at him and said, “Let’s do it, Dad”.*

*‘Today, you can download the heart warming incident from the internet to your own PC.’*

**Sometimes we all need the encouragement to keep us going when the going gets tough.**

In a sense, we are all disabled in one way or another. That is why God sent Jesus in order to carry us to the finishing line. Along the way, we need to minister and encourage one another so that we can all reach the finishing line together...