

**"WHEN I WAS SICK, YOU CARED FOR ME"***{Matthew 25:31-46}*Trinity Presbyterian ChurchJanuary 27, 2008

Prayer: Lord, I ask but one thing from you this morning: Break our hearts with the things that break the heart of God!

Tony Campolo tells a very interesting story...

*"I was walking down the street in Philadelphia and a bum came towards me. I mean a dirty, filthy guy. He was covered with soot from head to toe. You couldn't believe how messed up he was. He had this huge beard and there was rotted food stuck in the beard. As he approached me, he held out a cop of McDonald's coffee and said, 'Hey mister, want some of my coffee?'"*

*"I looked at this dirty, filthy man and said, 'Thanks, but that's okay,' and I walked by him. The minute I passed him, I knew I was doing the wrong thing, so I turned around and said, 'Excuse me, I would like some of your coffee.' I took some of the coffee and sipped it and gave it back to him. I said, 'You're being generous. How come you're being so generous to me?'"*

*"And this bum looked at me and said, 'Because the coffee was especially delicious today and I think that when God gives you something good, you ought to share it with people.'"*

*"I didn't know how to handle that, so I said, 'Can I give you anything?' I thought that he would hit me for five dollars.*

*"He said, 'No!' But, then he said, 'Yeah, yeah. I've changed my mind, there is something you can give me. You can give me a hug!'"*

*Campolo writes, "I was hoping for the five dollars! I put my arms around him, and as I in my suit and tie, and he in his filthy garb hugged each other on the street, I had the strange awareness that I wasn't hugging a bum, I was hugging Jesus. I found Jesus in that suffering man!"*

Whenever you meet a suffering person, you find that Jesus is there waiting to be loved in that individual!

In one of Jesus' most vivid parables, this lesson is made perfectly clear: God will judge us in accordance with our response to human need!

*"I was hungry and you fed Me, I was thirsty and you gave Me a drink, I was homeless and you gave Me a room, I was shivering and you gave Me clothes, I was sick and you stopped to visit, I was in prison and you came to Me."*

And those who heard Him responded, *"When did we see you hungry, thirsty, homeless, shivering, sick, or in prison?"*

Jesus simple response was: *"Whenever you did one of these things to someone overlooked or ignored, that was Me—you did it to Me!"*

**RYAN TALLY:** Last August when I was attending the Leadership Summit sponsored by the Willow Creek Association I saw a video clip that broke my heart. I have not been able to forget it. As I look at the little girl in

this DVD I picture her as Jesus...and when I see those walking by without a care...I see me...

### DVD #18

That's a powerful video, Ryan. You've just completed a seven day fast—drinking only water for an entire week—spiritually preparing yourself for your upcoming trip to South Africa, Malawi, and Uganda. How do you view this video differently after your fast than you did a week ago?

### RYAN TALLY

This video clip ends with **“YOU CAN HELP!”** Ryan has taken that literally!

God is not impressed by our IQ...

...He is not impressed if we're listed in the Fortune 500

...He is not impressed by what we've amassed in this life

...by the size of our bank account or financial holdings

God is only impressed by what we have given...how our hands have become His...how we've responded after seeing the oppressed...the men, women and children with HIV/AIDS...the sick...the homeless...and when we've reached out...only then to discover that those to whom we reached out to were...Jesus.

**He's not impressed...by extravagance—but simple things.**

**He's not impressed...by those who give for recognition...but, by those whose giving is uncalculated—they're compelled** and can do nothing less.

**Jesus is impressed when we help a little child...**and see in the eyes of that child a loving God who saw you and me as helpless...thirsty...hungry...imprisoned in our sin...and He reached out.

**Francis of Assisi** was a wealthy young man who lived in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. He had everything materially anyone could want...but he was not happy...there was an emptiness...his life was incomplete. One day he was out riding and met a leper, loathsome and repulsive. Something moved Francis to dismount and fling his arms around this wretched sufferer; and **in His arms the face of the leper changed to the face of Jesus!**

**His heart was broken by the things that break the heart of God!**

**Martin of Tours** was a Roman soldier...and a Christian. One cold wintry day a beggar stopped him and asked for alms. Martin had no money; but the beggar was blue and shivering with cold, and Martin gave what he had. He took off his soldier's coat, worn and frayed as it was; he cut it in two and gave half of it to the beggar man. *{His heart was broken by the things that break the heart of God!}*

That night Martin had a dream. In the dream he saw Heaven and all it's glory...angels...and...Jesus in the midst of them...He was wearing half of a Roman soldier's cloak. One of the angels said to Him, "Master, why are you wearing that battered old cloak? Who gave it to you?" And Jesus replied, "My servant Martin gave it to me!"

*"Whenever you did one of these things to someone overlooked or ignored, that was Me—you did it to Me!"*

Listen to what the Bible says about our responsibility to the poor...the oppressed...those sick—and dying--with HIV/AIDS...

*"If you help the poor, you are lending to the Lord—and He will repay you!"*

*{Proverbs 19:17, NLT}*

*"Those who shut their eyes to the cries of the poor will be ignored in their own time of need." {Proverbs 21:13, NLT}*

*"If anyone has enough money to live well and sees a brother or sister in need and refuses to help—how can God's love be in that person?" {1 John 3:17, NLT}*

I've appealed to you for three Sundays to ask the Lord to break your heart with the things that break the heart of God. Last Sunday I asked you to take a registration card and write the words "Study Group" on the back side if you were willing to get involved in a small group seeking ways to become involved in the HIV/AIDS Crises—especially in Africa—5% of those in attendance responded. I was a bit dismayed until one day this week I found a note in my box...

*"Dear Jack...a stirring sermon on Sunday...it got me thinking...I have this money set aside...{and}...I would like to give \$10,000 for the HIV/AIDS orphans in Africa...you may announce the amount, but keep my name secret...!"*

When I spoke with gentleman sometime later he responded, "Well, maybe others will want to respond as well!"

Then Jesus turned to those on His left and said...

*"I was hungry and you gave Me no meal, I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink, I was homeless and you gave Me no bed, I was shivering and you gave Me no clothes, sick and in prison, and you never visited..."*

And those who heard Him responded, "What are You talking about? When did we ever see You hungry or thirsty or homeless or shivering or sick or in prison and didn't help?"

Jesus responded: *"Whenever you failed to do one of these things to someone who was being overlooked or ignored, that was Me—you failed to do it to Me!"*

Richard Curtis is a well-known TV/Screen Writer and Film Producer who has been moved by the needs of the poor in the world—especially those victimized by the AIDS Pandemic. To date he—and his colleagues--have raised over \$500 million to bring assistance to over 6,400 villages in Africa.

Curtis is working through secular channels; however, he has challenged the church in the United States and Great Britain to get involved, saying, “*It’s our God-given duty to respond to human need.*”

Curtis told Bill Hybels at the Leadership Summit that the Judd’s song, “*Love Can Build a Bridge*” really said it all for him...

*I’d gladly walk across the desert  
With no shoes upon my feet  
To share with you the last bite  
Of bread I had to eat  
I would swim out to save you  
In your sea of broken dreams  
When all your hopes are sinkin’  
Let me show you what love means*

*Love can build a bridge  
Between your heart and mine  
Love can build a bridge  
Don’t you think its time?  
Don’t you think its time?*

#### **VIDEO CLIP #25 BEGINNING AT 47:32**

Is your heart broken for a broken world?

Are you prepared to do something about it?

Dare you ask the Lord to break your heart with the things that break the heart of God?

Are you prepared to sign a card and get involved in a study group? To perhaps go and minister first hand? To give from the abundance God has given to you?

Remember, **we can’t do everything, but in Jesus’ name, we can do something!**

Remember: *“Whenever you did one of these things to someone overlooked or ignored, that was Me—you did it to Me!”*