

Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion

Date : 15 May 2022

Sermon Title : Caring Like God Cares

Speaker : Rev Shannon Chan

Text : Deuteronomy 10:17-19

INTRODUCTION

Channel News Asia's video on hunger and food insecurity shows that a lack of reliable access to nutritious food due to financial constraints exists even in seemingly wealthy Singapore. This eye opening report became a springboard where God would show me, over time, through His word His unrelenting love for the broken, outcast and forgotten. Today's text from the Book of Deuteronomy addresses the role of a Christian and the church in caring for the least of these whether they be fatherless, widow, stranger or foreigner.

Caring Like God Cares (Deuteronomy 10:17-19)

In Deuteronomy, Moses was delivering his farewell addresses while in the process of transferring the leadership of the nation of Israel to Joshua. As he was writing, He remembered the covenant love relationship that God had with His people. Moses' dying desire was that the people that he had poured his life into would know God spiritually, inwardly, externally and one day eternally. He also knew the people had stubborn and unresponsive hearts and a resistance to move toward God. Moses knew some things had to be changed.

A. The call to recognize who God is (Deuteronomy 10:17)

God is worthy of worship, praise and our love and devotion because:

- **He is Supreme** – God of gods, Lord of lords.
 - The title “God” is always important because it refers to God's overarching power, His transcendence, His overall majesty.
 - The title “Lord” refers to God's ownership and sovereignty over all His creation.

Moses is identifying God as the infinite, unique and supreme One who has absolute dominion and power over the entire universe.

- **He is Awesome** – the great, mighty, awe-inspiring God, He is worthy of honour and glory.
- **He is Integrity** – He does not show partiality or favoritism. He deals the same with all men and women. He is not corrupt, does not bribe and cannot be bribed. He cannot be manipulated to action.

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Moses' appeal to care like God cares, doing justice to the fatherless and widow and loving the stranger is sandwiched between the command to:

- **Fear the Lord (Deu 10:12, 20)** – To care the God-centred way is only possible when we give Him reverence. When His rule and reign is in our lives, then only will His will be done and His Kingdom come even as we carry His Kingdom within us to others.

Paula Fuller was there in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. There were many issues that were not addressed locally that resulted in a devastating flood and destructions from the hurricane in New Orleans. At a prayer meeting, she came to conclude that besides the physical help to be rendered, what was most needed too was a demonstration of the presence of the Kingdom of God, not just a proclamation of God though it is important. The episode challenged Paula to grasp what it means to have the presence of the Kingdom of God present and available to those who need spiritual and physical salvation – to show that God cares about their situation.

- **It should not need or take a disaster for us to recognize or taste the pain in the world, our community or in the lives of the people we know and around us.**

The pain is evident around us and its awareness comes from our interaction with family and friends, neighbours, colleagues and those around us. Important question we need to ask ourselves:

- **Do people we engage with experience the presence of the Kingdom of God in us when we engage with them?**

One avenue to bring the presence of the Kingdom of God to the community is through volunteering at FaithActs. Your participation will give you opportunity to care like God cares by bringing the presence and power of the Kingdom of God within you into the lives of many, both young and old with very deep personal needs.

B. The invitation to participate in the Lord's mission (Deuteronomy 10:18-19)

- **His heart for the vulnerable and broken** – if we love the Lord, we will love the least around us; the fatherless, widows, strangers. Moses did not want the people then to forget those who were vulnerable after God had blessed them. Moses reminded them to love the stranger because they themselves were once strangers in the land of Egypt, and above that, the Lord's heart is for the vulnerable and broken. God has an unrelenting love for the outcast, oppressed, or forgotten because He knows their shame and pain as a stranger.

Caring for a stranger is not to be seen as a “nice thing to do” or done out of pity or duty, but rather to be considered a requirement of following God. In Moses' time,

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justice and protection for the stranger were built into Israel's laws. God forbade the Israelites from taking advantage of the strangers. He also knows the temptation for us to be concerned only with ourselves, our family and friends, and to distance ourselves from and be unconcerned for those who are unlike us.

However, the God of the Bible is the Defender of those who are powerless and a giver to the poor. (refer to Tim Keller's quote in sermon)

- **What does it mean to be poor?**

"Poverty come in many forms. Certainly lacking material goods is a form of poverty. But lacking family and loved ones is also a form of poverty. Lacking skills to do work or lacking education is a form of poverty. Poverty is not just an absence of stuff; it is a disposition of the soul – a brokenness, a hopelessness, an imprisonment. And lacking any relationship with God is the deepest form of poverty."

- Jason Derouchie

Becoming stranger centred

- The church today can be seen to have grown homogenously; made up of people like us. If there are high numbers of foreigners in our land, why are there not high numbers of foreigners in our churches? (refer to Dr Tan Lai Yong mentioned in sermon) We cannot do much about this unless we rediscover God's love and His love will propel us to move outside of our circle to these communities which provide a mission field for churches without leaving our shores.
- Even within our own social communities (e.g. Chinese), we can become strangers to each other because of different social-economic backgrounds, or because they do not think like us. Are we guilty of labelling them (even if not expressly) strangers or aliens and then discriminate against, marginalize or side-line them?

When Greg Paul attended to a dying AIDS patient Neil, Greg came to know what it means to care like God cares. It was in cradling Neil's soiled foot to wipe it that Greg received a powerful revelation as his mind was filled with Jesus washing the feet of His disciples at the Last Supper. He knew his purpose for being there - to be the presence of Christ, caring like God cares. Greg was also deeply touched by Neil's vulnerability and the words of Jesus in Mathew 25:35-40 were ringing in his ears – this too was the purpose of their relationship. For the first time, Greg saw Jesus in Neil. When we minister to other, we ourselves are ministered to.

CONCLUSION

We are called to care like God cares as He has commanded. Let us recognize who God is and fear Him, giving Him reverence so He rules and reigns in us. May we bring the power and presence of the Kingdom of God in our lives to the weak,

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outcast and vulnerable around us and fulfil Matthew 25:35-40. Why? Because people need the Lord.

A. Review Sermon Application

Purpose: Reflect on how you have been embodying God's truth.

1. a. How successful have you been in fulfilling what you/your group had committed to do for the last FaithWalk!?
 - b. What were some challenges you faced and what would you like to celebrate?
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- 2a. In following God, we are required to love and care for others, especially the weak and vulnerable amongst us, as God cares. How have you and your small group been fulfilling this command?
 - 2b. Is there a particular segment of society that you or your small group has a passion to minister too? Discuss what has been done and what could be done better.

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B. Relate Sermon Content

Purpose: Relate with the Truth and Resolve for Transformation.

3. God's heart for the vulnerable and broken requires that we love the least around us; the fatherless, widows, strangers, the outcast, oppressed, or forgotten, because He knows their shame and pain as a stranger.
 - a. (i) Reflecting on your life, was there a time when you were in need as one of the above?
 - (ii) How has God's unrelenting love been there for you?
 - (iii) How has this episode in your life impacted your passion to care and love the vulnerable community?
 - (iv) What is one challenge you need to overcome in caring for the vulnerable and broken?
 - b. The deepest poverty is said to be the lack of a relationship with God. (*Jason Derouchie*) How does this impact your understanding of the invitation to participate in the Lord's mission in Deuteronomy 10:18-19?

- 4a. (i) Has your small group been stranger centred or have you only been drawn to people of similar background, social status, thinking etc.?
 - (ii) Do people you/your small group engages with experience the presence of the Kingdom of God in you when you engage with them?
- 4b. (i) What are some possible opportunities for you to bring care and love to someone who is different?
 - (ii) How can your group with its varied abilities, gifts and resources help you be a blessing to that person?

Suggested initiative: 1) FMC's 56th Anniversary Project: Be-A-Blessing
2) Be a volunteer at FaithActs
3) Show care to your helper/a foreign worker

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C. Testimonies and Prayer

Purpose: Give glory to God and seek Him.

5. Share your testimony on how you have experienced the love and grace of God in caring for someone who needs the presence of God in his/her life. How has that experience revealed to you God's majesty, power and purpose.

OR

Give thanks to God that when we bring the power and presence of the Kingdom of God in our lives to the weak, outcast and vulnerable around us, we are fulfilling Matthew 25:35-40.

6. In prayer, recognize God for who He is and give Him glory for His supremacy, awesomeness and integrity. Pray for the Holy Spirit to lead you to know where Jesus' heart is for the lost and forgotten and commit all your group's plans to bring God's Kingdom to the community of your choice in Q2. Or persons in Q4. to God, asking Him to enable your group to care like God cares.

Optional items:

Suggested worship songs:

1. All the Earth – Parachute Band [\(1219\) All The Earth - Parachute Band \(Best Worship Song with Lyrics\) - YouTube](#)
2. Potter's Hand – Hillsong [\(1219\) Potters Hand - Hillsong Lyrics Video - YouTube](#)
3. Power of Your Name – Lincoln Brewster [\(1219\) The Power of Your Name - YouTube](#)

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