

**METAL DETECTORS: Fun in The Son**  
**Message for August 26, 2018**  
**North East United Methodist Church**  
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*“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.*

*“Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’*

*“Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’*

*“The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’*

*“Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.’*

*“They also will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?’*

*“He will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.’*

*“Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.”*

-Matthew 25:31-46

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**But if we are the body'  
Why aren't His arms reaching?  
Why aren't His hands healing?  
Why aren't His words teaching?  
And if we are the body  
Why aren't His feet going?  
Why is His love not showing them there is a way?  
There is a way.**

Jesus makes it clear that there must be a direct correlation between how we have lived our lives and our relationship with God. If we truly have a relationship, if we truly have opened our hearts to Christ, to our Father in heaven, it will be reflected in our actions.

Once we recognize our own sinfulness, the fact that we are a mess, and realize what Jesus Christ did for us on the cross two thousand years ago, if we wrap our minds around the depth of love Christ has shown us, we cannot help but to be changed and to want to serve God out of gratitude for all He has given us. This acceptance of Christ, this gratitude for what God has done for us, will be seen in our daily actions and love of others.

Have you ever been at the beach and seen someone with a metal detector combing the sand, pulling out trinkets, coins, perhaps a watch, and maybe, even a diamond ring?



The metal detector sends out vibrations, sound, that helps separate the trinkets, the treasure, the metal, from the sand.



One day, we will stand before Jesus Christ, who has been given all authority by God, the Father, and Jesus, like a metal detector, will begin to separate

God will separate those who have talked about their love of God, who have “voiced” a relationship, *from* those who truly have a relationship with God expressed through their lives, their actions, their works of mercy and compassion.

We are told in James 1:22, “***Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.***” The New King James Version...“*But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only.*”

We must “*be doers of the word, and not hearers only.*”

I John 2:6 states, “***He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.***”

The scriptures tell us that God is love. When we accept Him into our hearts through Jesus Christ, our hearts should be filled to overflowing, and our lives should begin to grow beyond ourselves. In fact, Charles Spurgeon goes as far to say, “*If Christ does not work such things in you, you have not part in him; if you have not produced such works as these you have not believed in Jesus.*”

Be very clear that Jesus never says that it is our works that will gain us entrance to heaven. Jesus makes this clear in Matthew 7:21-23.

***Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and, in your name, perform many miracles?’ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’***

Jesus wants us to understand that it is a real, vibrant, deep, and true relationship with Him that is necessary. This relationship is expressed outwardly by the works we do, the actions we take. It is expressed outwardly by a changed life. Our acts of charity and compassion must come out of a love for Jesus Christ, a love of God, and a love for what God loves.

If we simply say we love God but our lives do not show love for others, our lives do not show joy in serving, perhaps our relationship with God is in word only. If we do good works, serving the church and the community, but have not a relationship with Jesus Christ, our works are empty and as Spurgeon says, “*smell of selfhood*” and “*it is you yourself that you are clothing.*”

We are called to love as Christ loved.

How then can the believer in Christ love as Christ loved?

The believer in Christ has the Holy Spirit living within him (1 Corinthians 6:19–20). By obeying the Spirit, through the Word of God, the believer can love like Christ does. He shows that unconditional, sacrificial, forgiving love to fellow believers, but it doesn’t stop there. He also shows the love of Christ to friends, to family members, to coworkers, etc. (Ephesians 5:18–6:4; Galatians 5:16, 22–23). Even enemies are the recipients of Christ’s love (Matthew 5:43–48).

Christ’s love displayed through the believer is unlike the “*love*” generated by the flesh, which can be selfish, egotistical, unforgiving, and insincere. Paul gives a wonderful description of what Christ’s love will be like in and through the believer who walks in the Spirit. He writes, in I Corinthians 13:4–7, “***Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.***”

People don’t naturally love with a 1 Corinthians 13-type love. To love like that, there must be a change of heart. A person must realize that he is a sinner before God and understand that Christ died on the cross and rose again to provide him forgiveness; then he must make the decision to accept Christ as his personal Savior. At that point he is forgiven by Christ and

receives God's gift of eternal life—in fact, he becomes a participant in the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4). In Christ he knows that he is genuinely loved by God. The new life the believer receives includes a new capacity to love like Christ loves, for the believer now has living within him the unconditional, sacrificial, forgiving, eternal, and holy love of God (Romans 5:5).

Do we have a relationship with Christ? Have we received “*a new capacity to love like Christ loves*,” having now the Holy Spirit, the “*holy love of God*” living within us?

And if we claim to have that relationship but our actions do not reflect our faith, our love for God and all God loves, Jesus challenges us to take a hard look at ourselves. As Casting Crowns sang earlier,

**But if [you] are the body  
Why aren't His arms reaching?  
Why aren't His hands healing?  
Why aren't His words teaching?  
And if [you] are the body  
Why aren't His feet going?  
Why is His love not showing them there is a way?**

Many years ago, a man wanted to play in the Imperial Orchestra, but he couldn't play a note. Since he was a person of great wealth and influence, however, he demanded to be allowed to join the orchestra so that he could perform in front of the king.

The conductor agreed to let him sit in the second row of the orchestra. Even though he couldn't read music, he was given a flute, and when a concert would begin, he would raise his instrument, pucker his lips, and move his fingers. He went through all the motions of playing, but he never made a sound.

This deception went on for two years. Then one day a new conductor took over the Imperial Orchestra. He told the orchestra that he wanted to personally audition all the players to see how well they could play. The audition would weed out all those who weren't able to meet his standards, and he would dismiss them from the orchestra.

One by one the players performed in his presence. Frantic with worry when it was his turn, the phony flutist pretended to be sick. The conductor insisted

that the man appear and demonstrate his skill. Shamefacedly, the man had to confess that he was a fake. That was the day he had to “*face the music.*”

Jesus wanted us to understand that sitting in church doesn’t make us any more a Christian than sitting in an orchestra makes us a musician or sitting in a garage makes us a car. As it says in 2 Corinthians 5:10, “***For we must all stand before Christ to be judged. We will each receive whatever we deserve for the good or evil we have done in our bodies.***”

The things Jesus picks out to define one who is faithful, who follows Christ – giving a hungry person a meal, or a thirsty person a drink, welcoming a stranger, cheering the sick, visiting the prisoner – are things anyone can do. As William Barclay writes, “*It is not a question of giving away huge sums of money, or of writing our names in the annals of history; it is a case of giving simple help to the people we meet every day. There never was a parable which so opened the way to glory to us all.*”

Furthermore, Jesus stresses that we are to care for the “*least of these,*” those that many deem least valuable, less than desirable.

Two men who discovered the truth of this parable, the truth that help given from a loving heart to those we meet, is help given to Jesus Himself, were Saint Francis of Assisi and St. Martin of Tours.

Francis of Assisi was wealthy and high-born and high-spirited, but he was not happy. There was a void in his life. One day when he was out riding, he met a leper, loathsome and repulsive in the ugliness of his disease.



Francis was moved to dismount and he flung his arms around the leper. In that moment, as Francis tells the story, the face of the leper changed to the face of Christ.

A second man who discovered the truth of this parable was St Martin of Tours. Martin was a Roman soldier and a Christian, and became the third Bishop of Tours in the year 371.

While a soldier, one winter day, as he was entering the city a beggar stopped him and asked for alms. Martin had no money but saw that the beggar was shivering and cold. He took off his soldier's coat, cut it in two, and gave half of it to the beggar.



That night, Martin had a dream and, in this dream, he saw heaven and angels and Jesus. Jesus was wearing half of a Roman soldier's cloak. In the dream, one of the angels asked Jesus, *"Master, why are you wearing that old battered cloak? Who gave it to you?"* And Jesus answered softly: *"My servant Martin gave it to me."*

Lindsay P. Armstrong writes, *"This passage provides a wellness check and possibly even a warning to those living in unhealthy, self-centered ways. Akin to measuring weight or blood pressure, Matthew 25:31-46's emphasis, on freely sharing with strangers, prisoners, and all who are hungry, thirsty, naked, and/or sick, is a key diagnostic tool to help us assess our righteousness and health. If we cannot share freely and fully or if we do not make ourselves available to do so, this indicates that our relationship with God and the world is not as healthy and whole as Jesus' triumph on the cross makes possible. Loving those for whom Jesus gave his life, particularly those who are undervalued, is a primary expression of our love of God and of our experience of God's love for us."*

Did we live our faith? Did we live a life of love, of joy in Christ? Did we help others come to know and experience that love or were we a hindrance?

Was the relationship we voiced in our worship and among our Christian friends, expressed outwardly in our day-to-day living, in our giving, in our marriages, with our children, in how we reacted to the stranger on the street or in the pew next to us on Sunday?

We must constantly be growing in our faith with God and how we live out that faith day-to-day. One day we will hear, ***“Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world”*** (Matthew 25:34).

Jesus will beckon the faithful to come and receive their reward and the reward is a place that has been prepared, since the creation of the world, just for us. Spurgeon writes, *“It is a kingdom prepared, and it has been so long a time prepared, and he who prepares it is so wondrously rich in resources, that we cannot possibly conceive how excellent it must be.”*

May we never forget that we are children of God, who will *“inherit”* all that has been prepared, NOT because of what we have done, NOT because of what we do, but because of God’s grace, His gift...and His LOVE.

Armstrong continues, *“God created the world out of an abundance of love. Like a bubbling fountain, God is love and overflows with love. In creation, God gives something of self, and in sending Jesus and His Holy Spirit, God repeatedly and generously pours love out upon all people...Created in the image of this freely giving god, we freely share, because this is what it means to be created in God’s image...We give as an expression of the love that is inside of us, bubbling up, spilling over, and flowing out.”*

May Christ’s church, each of us, be grateful and thankful for all God has done for us.

May our relationship with Christ be so deep, true, and vibrant, that our arms are reaching, hands are healing, words are teaching, feet are going.

May our lives, like Paul said...





**HAVE LOVE, SHOW LOVE, and BE LOVE.** May this love for all God's children flow out of Christ in us, flow out of a gratitude and love for the One who loved us first!