

# Helping People as Jesus Helped Them



## SABBATH—AUGUST 15

**READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON:** Matthew 5:13, 14; Matthew 8:5–10; Matthew 4:23–25; Matthew 25:31–46.

**MEMORY VERSE:** “He saw the crowds of people and felt sorry for them because they were worried and helpless. They were like [the same as] sheep without a shepherd” (Matthew 9:36, ICB).

**JESUS DEEPLY CARED** about people. He lived to serve people, not Himself. Jesus met the needs of the people around Him. He served God by showing people love and mercy. He healed their bodies, minds, and hearts. Jesus healed people with awful skin problems. He helped the blind to see and the deaf to hear. He set people free from demons. Jesus fed the hungry. He took care of the needy. When Jesus did these things, the hearts and lives of people were changed.

Why were the lives of people changed? Because people saw that Jesus deeply cared about them. His love was real. That is why their hearts were open to the Bible truths He taught. “Only Jesus’ way will give us true success in reaching people. The Savior spent time with people. He wanted what was best for them. He was kind to them. He took care of their needs. He won their hearts. Then He told them, ‘Follow Me.’ ”—Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing*, page 143, adapted. Jesus saw that people on this earth needed to see the Good News in action, not just hear people talk about it. When we live the way Jesus did, our lives will show Bible truth. Our lives will give power to our words about Jesus.



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**HOW DID JESUS FEEL ABOUT PEOPLE?****(Matthew 5:13, 14)**

Jesus always looked for the good in other people. He brought out the best in them. The religious leaders in Jesus' day blame Jesus because He " 'welcomes sinners and even eats with them!' " (Luke 15:2, ERV). The leaders are worried because Jesus is friendly with people who do not respect God. The leaders' ideas about religion are different from Jesus' ideas. The leaders think religion is about God's people separating from sinners. They say, "We should not involve ourselves with sinners in any way." So, the leaders are surprised when Jesus says, " 'I have not come to get those who think they are right with God to follow me. I have come to get sinners to follow me' " (Matthew 9:13, NIV).

The Jewish leaders' religion is about avoiding sin. They think, "We must do everything we can to keep from getting dirty from sin." So, they stay away from people they think are bad or full of sin. Jesus' way of doing things is very different. He came to this earth. It is the same as a pit filled with snakes. But Jesus does not avoid us. He jumps right in to save us. He is " 'the light of the world' " (John 8:12, ERV).

**Read Matthew 5:13, 14. What two word pictures does Jesus use to show us who His followers are? Why do you think Jesus uses these word pictures? Read also John 1:9; John 12:46; and Philippians 2:15 for the answer.**

Salt is very important during New Testament times. It is worth a lot. At times, the Roman army used salt as money. So, salt is a word picture for riches. Salt also gives flavor to food and keeps it from spoiling. When Jesus says His followers are the same as salt, what is He really saying? He is saying that the true riches on this earth are not the people with the most power and money. The true riches on this earth are Christians who build up the kingdom of God. Their kind and unselfish works help to keep love alive on this earth.

The second word picture Jesus uses in Matthew 5:14 is light. Light does not avoid darkness. Light shines in the dark. Light does not separate from darkness. It makes the darkness become light. Jesus' followers must bring the light of God's truth to people whose lives are dark with sin.



**This earth is the same as a pit filled with snakes. But Jesus does not avoid us. He jumps right in to save us.**

**JESUS IS KIND TO PEOPLE (Matthew 8:5–10)**

As we learned yesterday, Jesus always wanted to bring out the best in people. Even when times were hard, Jesus acted with mercy and love. Luke tells us that the crowds “were amazed [surprised] at the beautiful words he spoke” (Luke 4:22, ICB). John tells us that “grace [mercy, forgiveness, and power over sin] and truth came through [from] Jesus Christ” (John 1:17, ERV). Jesus won people’s hearts. His kind words caused them to open their hearts to Him.



**Think about how the centurion feels when Jesus tells him that his faith is bigger than anything Jesus ever found in any person in all of Israel.**

**Read Matthew 8:5–10 and Mark 12:34. What hope-filled words does Jesus say to a Roman army leader and a Jewish religious leader?**

Jesus’ words to the centurion, or Roman army leader, are a big change from what the Jewish religious leaders think. Think about how the centurion must feel when Jesus tells him that his faith is bigger than anything Jesus ever found in any person in all of Israel! Wow! Think also about what the Jewish religious leader feels when Jesus tells him, “ ‘You are not far from God’s kingdom’ ” (Mark 12:34, NIV). What kind words! Jesus has the skill to bring out the best in people. Our kind words, thanks, and praise can help people to open their hearts to the Good News. Look for the good in the people around you. Let them know how much you are thankful for them and what they do.

**Compare Isaiah 42:3; Colossians 4:5, 6; and Ephesians 4:15. What important rules do these verses teach us about sharing our faith with other people and being friendly to them?**

When our words are encouraging and filled with God’s love and mercy, we will have power to change people’s lives for the better. Isaiah tells us that Jesus “will not break a broken branch or put out a little fire” (Isaiah 42:3, NLV). These word pictures show us that Jesus is so loving that He is careful not to hurt someone who is just coming to believe in Him. Jesus will not remove or destroy the smallest “sparks” of faith in their hearts.

**“How” we say something is as important as “what” we say. Maybe it is even more important. Why is this true?**

**JESUS' HEALING WORK: PART 1 (Matthew 9:1–7)**

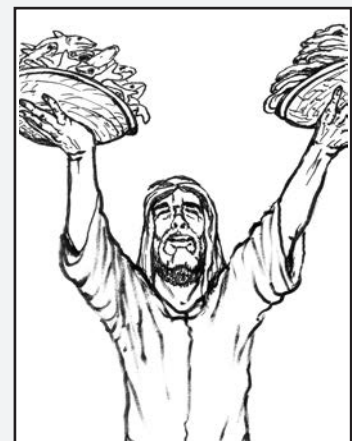
Jesus shared the truth in ways that were powerful and full of life. Every day Jesus met people who had many different needs. We meet these same types of people too. Their minds, bodies, hearts, and spirits all have needs. Jesus is excited to work with us to meet the needs of these people. How do we work with Jesus to do that? By showing that we care for people when they are sad or lonely. Jesus also helps us show people that we care about their joys, hopes, and dreams.

While on earth, Jesus meets people's everyday needs so that He can meet their deepest spiritual needs. These everyday needs also are named "felt needs." A felt need is a problem that someone knows that he or she cannot solve on his or her own. This person needs help. Maybe he or she needs to stop smoking, lose weight, eat better food, or needs help with stress. Maybe this person has more basic needs. He or she may need food, a house, or to see a doctor. Or this person may need advice about his or her marriage or family.

Felt needs are different from an ultimate need. An ultimate need is the thing that humans need most. They need a personal connection with God. They need to know that the choices they make in this life can lead to everlasting life or death. We live on a planet ruined and hurt by sin. So, our becoming one with God is our ultimate need.

**Read the story in Matthew 9:1–7 about the man who cannot walk or move his body. Also, read the story in Mark 5:25–34 about the woman who has bled for 12 years. How do these stories show us that Jesus felt that healing the body was connected with helping people to become one with God?**

Jesus' healing work includes much more than healing the body and mind. Jesus deeply wants people to become whole again. For Jesus, healing someone's body without healing his or her spirit is not true healing. God's love should cause us to want the best health for people. God's love will help us to care even more for their spiritual health. We should want people to live happy and healthy lives here and in heaven. Remember, every person that Jesus heals on earth dies later on. So, his or her real need above everything else is spiritual, right?



**While on earth, Jesus meets people's everyday needs so that He can meet their deepest spiritual needs.**

**JESUS' HEALING WORK: PART 2 (Matthew 4:23–25)**

Each time Jesus heals someone He shows people who God is and what is in His heart.

**Read Matthew 4:23–25 and Matthew 9:35. What three things did Jesus do to meet people's needs? How did these three things change people's lives for the better?**

Jesus' work on earth has three parts: (1) teaching, (2) preaching, and (3) healing. Jesus shares Bible truth so that we will have a reason to live. He says, " 'I have come so they may have life. I want them to have it [life] in the fullest possible way' " (John 10:10, NIV). Jesus' work on earth is filled with grace. Grace is God's gift of mercy, forgiveness, and power over sin. Jesus came to fill our lives with grace now and forever.

**Read Mark 1:32–39. Jesus spends all day healing the sick and casting evil spirits out of people. Then the next morning He spends time in prayer when the crowds likely come again to Him for more healing. Then Jesus leaves for another city. Why doesn't Jesus heal the people? Do you see His reason in Mark 1:38, 39?**

This story is very helpful. Jesus heals many people. The next day, Jesus leaves the crowds. They come looking for Jesus. They also need healing. So, why doesn't Jesus stay and heal them? Jesus says that the reason He came to this earth is to preach the Good News. Jesus is not only a miracle worker. But He also is God's own Son who came to save humans. Jesus does not want to heal only people's bodies. Jesus also wants people to accept the gift of everlasting life. He wants to give them this gift. Jesus tells us in clear words why He came to this earth: " 'The Son of Man came to find lost people and save them' " (Luke 19:10, ERV). Each time Jesus heals someone, He shows people who God is and what is in His heart. Every healing act that Jesus does ends suffering and gives someone the chance for everlasting life.

**Maybe you are poor or sick. Can your life be full of the grace that Jesus offers you anyway? Does Jesus offer people something deeper than only healing their bodies? If yes, what is it? In what ways can we lead people to spiritual truths when we help take care of the needs of their hearts and bodies?**

**WHAT JESUS CARES ABOUT MOST (Matthew 25:31–46)**

In Matthew 25, Jesus tells His followers three end-time picture stories. These picture stories show us what Jesus expects of His end-time people who wait for His Second Coming. The picture story about the ten sleeping girls shows us that it is important to be filled with the Holy Spirit. The picture story about the ten talents shows us why we must use the gifts that God gives to each one of us. The picture story about the sheep and the goats shows us that true Christians take care of the needs of the people that God brings into our lives each day.

**Read Matthew 25:31–46. What does Jesus say that real Christianity is all about? Make a list of the types of work done for God in these verses.**

The picture story in Matthew 25:31–46 talks about taking care of people’s health needs. At the same time, is there something more to this story? Yes, there is. Humans have a hunger and thirst for Jesus in their spirits. Only Jesus can fill that need and take away their hunger and thirst (John 6:35; John 4:13, 14). We are all empty until Jesus fills us with His holy life. Jesus covers us with His love and forgiveness the same as a person who puts on clothes is covered (Revelation 3:18; Revelation 19:7, 8).

The Old Testament messengers often say that humans are sick and cannot be healed (Isaiah 1:5; Jeremiah 30:12–15). But Jeremiah shows us the one thing that can heal us: “ ‘And I will bring your health back and heal your wounds [deep cuts],’ says the LORD’ ” (Jeremiah 30:17, ERV). Jesus heals us from the sin that makes us sick and kills us.

The picture story about the sheep and goats warns us to take care of the needs of people around us. It also shows us how Jesus takes care of the deepest needs of our hearts. This story also invites us to work with Jesus to take care of the needs of people around us. So, we do not want to live selfish lives and do nothing to help people. Then we will be in danger of losing everlasting life. In the picture story, Jesus praises the people who give their lives to help people. Then the Lord welcomes them into heaven to live with Him forever. But He does not welcome the people who lived selfish lives. They did not care about helping people on this earth. So, Jesus does not welcome them into heaven.



**Jesus covers us with His love and forgiveness the same as clothes.**



**We must go to people and touch their lives where they are.**

**ADDITIONAL THOUGHT:** “Many have no faith in God. They also no longer have any faith in humans. But their hearts are moved by kind, helpful acts. The person who moves their hearts does not work for praise or money. He comes to their homes. He helps the sick. He feeds the hungry. He gives clothes to people who do not have any. He comforts people with sad hearts. He leads the ones he helps to Jesus. This human worker shows he is Jesus’ messenger. The love and pity in his human heart come from Jesus. As the people see all the kind acts he does, their hearts are moved. They feel grateful. Faith grows in their hearts. They see that God cares for them. They are ready to listen as the Bible is opened and taught to them.”—Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing*, page 145, adapted.

Jesus’ work helps people to trust Him and helps them to accept the Good News. The church is Jesus’ body on earth. With loving hearts, church members meet the needs of people everywhere. Jesus sends us out in His name. He sends us into our towns and neighborhoods to make the lives of people better. Yes, we need to be careful about not being made dirty by sin and the evil things on this earth. At the same time, we must not stay away from people. We must go to them and touch their lives where they are. We must let God use us to do His work. God wants to take people from where they are and bring them to where they should be.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① Why is the loving work that Jesus does for God so powerful in melting hard hearts and helping people to accept spiritual truths? What if we as a people showed the same concern for people that Jesus did? How will it make us better witnesses for God and Bible truth?
- ② Think about a time when you said something that was true. But you said it in the wrong way. What did you learn from that experience to help you not to do it again? Why is it best to share the truth only when we are calm?
- ③ What types of work for God can your church do in your community that you are not now doing?

## A SURPRISE IN SUDAN

For Seventh-day Adventist couples living in Sudan, life often can be difficult. That was true for me and my wife, Suzanne. We worked for ADRA, the Adventist Development and Relief Agency, in Sudan. ADRA is a special office of the Seventh-day Adventist Church that helps people in need in other countries. Some days the temperature outside in Sudan was between 102 and 108 degrees (39–42 degrees Celsius) from May to September. For sure, a cold drink was something special on days this hot.

Coming home one day, I followed my wife Suzanne into the kitchen. I sat on the counter and talked with her as she made our meal. Suzanne asked me what I wanted to drink.

“What do you have?” I asked.

She listed the names of some cold drinks we had in the refrigerator. But I didn’t want any of them.

I told her that what I really wanted more than anything was a big, cold bottle of my favorite drink. I had not had this drink since we left our home in the United States.

“We don’t have any,” Suzanne said.

Two hours later, a friend pulled into our driveway. Our friend worked with USAID, the United States Agency for International Development, in Sudan’s capital in Khartoum. USAID is a special office of the United States government. USAID helps people in need worldwide.

Our friend worked with us on several ADRA plans that USAID helped to support with money. Our friend allowed us to get mail at her home address. When the mail arrived, she brought it to us. On this day, she brought us a box filled with things that we needed badly from the United States. One of those things was shampoo. I opened the box. I knew that our American friends also had put a bag of raisins in the box for our friend too. The bag of raisins lay right on top. Under the raisins I saw two bottles of hair shampoo. But wait! Something else was in the box. I dug under the paper and found a big bottle of my favorite drink!

I never asked anyone from the United States to send me my favorite drink. But on a hot day in Sudan, I felt that God sent me a special gift. Weeks before, when I had asked my wife Suzanne for my favorite drink, the bottle was already on its way to Khartoum. God cares about even the smallest parts of our lives. He loves to give good gifts to His children too. “When we give, we show what living is all about.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 623, adapted. God promises, “But those people who go to the Lord for help will have every good thing” (Psalm 34:10, ICB). God saw my wish for my favorite drink earlier that day in the kitchen. He must have smiled and thought, “Wait and see what I have for you!”



**I dug under the paper and found a big bottle of my favorite drink!**

