



**COMMUNITY SERVICES DAY
(Sabbath School Program)**

May 9, 2020

**Patty Marsh, Director
Adventist Community Services
Upper Columbia Conference**

Scripture Focus: Matthew 22:37-40

Suggested Musical Selections:

The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal

No. 311 “I Would Be Like Jesus”

No. 626 “In a Little While We’re Going Home” (Note lyrics of especially the 2nd & 3rd verses)

After a convention in a foreign city, a pack of high-powered six-figured-salary executives rushed through an airport to catch a jet home. Suddenly one of them accidentally caught the edge of a table filled with apples that tumbled awkwardly across the floor. The one who hit the table glanced at the carnage unfolding behind his heels, but, ever fighting the clock, he never lost his momentum. The others didn’t turn around at all.

Except one. Pausing, he glanced at the turmoil they had left, and then back at the shrinking figures of his fellow executives. When they noticed that he was no longer with them, they stopped and turned around, looking as if they were thinking, *What are you doing? We have a plane to catch!* Reading their expressions, he answered, “Go on ahead. I will see you back in the States on Monday.”

Hesitating, they stared at him and then, with a collective shrug, vanished. With them gone, he glanced at the girl whose apple stand had collapsed. She wore glasses with lenses as thick as soda bottle bottoms, and her eyes—distorted in size by the dirty and scratched glass—filled with tears as she groped for her fallen wares. An apple practically had to be touching her face before she could see it.

The salesman told her to calm down, that he would get all the apples. She looked toward him, her eyes filled with wonderment and pain. He wasn’t sure how

much of him she could see. Setting the rickety stand back up, he gathered the apples and put them back. The ones too bruised to sell he dumped into a garbage can. Finished, he pulled out his wallet and handed her \$100, saying that this was for the damage and trouble they had caused. She clutched the money in her hand, holding the bills and appearing as if she couldn't quite believe what she couldn't quite see.

“OK,” he said, “I have to go. I hope everything is fine now.”

Lowering the money from in front of her eyes, she peered at him. Again, he wasn't quite sure what she saw.

“Is everything OK now?” he asked.

She squeezed the money tighter.

“I have to go.”

She nodded and, as he left, she called out, “Please, sir.”

He turned around and answered, “Yes?”

“Sir, are you Jesus?”¹

Optional Prayer: Dear Father . . . this is what the world is looking for – Jesus in the shoes of His followers. Oh, Jesus, please help us know how to live. Amen.

No, he wasn't Jesus – not even close. But her child-like question revealed an important truth about Jesus. Being a follower of Jesus isn't just about believing the truth and the hope of something beyond this life.

Why would the young, almost blind girl ask such a question, “Are you Jesus?” Let's glance at a few sample texts reflecting the life of Jesus, beginning with Matthew 8 . . .

- In Matthew 8:3, Jesus reaches out and touches a man – fresh new skin appears where before oozed leprous sores.

¹ Clifford Goldstein, *Life Without Limits*

- Two verses down (v, 5) a centurion asks for help for his paralyzed servant – who was experiencing “terrible suffering” – and Jesus instantly replied, “I will go and heal him.”
- In Matthew 9, verse 18, a grieving ruler kneels at Jesus’ feet. “My daughter has died,” he cries out. But all it took was a touch from Jesus’ powerful hand and the girl is once again alive!
- As Jesus leaves, two blind men cry out, “Have mercy on us.” (v.27) Their faith, combined with Jesus’ touch to their eyes, brings sight.
- A few verses later, Matthew 9:32-33, a mute man possessed with demons crosses His path – his life too will be changed forever! The devil’s angels must flee when the power of Jesus is manifest.
- Turning to the next book in Mark 14:13, a crowd is following Jesus, and we discover He has compassion on them and feeds them – 5,000 men plus women and children with just five loaves and two fishes!
- Let’s look at what is happening in Luke 5:17. Friends remove tiles from a roof – as a result, a paralyzed man and many others see Jesus at work and are changed forever!

Do you remember how John ended his Gospel book?

“Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written,” John 21:25 NIV.

Jesus’ life was one of doing good to others and lives were transformed . . .

What about today?

Do you know someone who is sick that needs your touch? While we may not heal a someone physically, oh, that touch of love by a visit, a gift of food, or words of encouragement, even a prayer, can bring rich healing to the soul.

Do you know someone in “terrible suffering,” perhaps from the loss of a loved one, a child making poor choices, substance abuse, loss of a job, illness, depression, or a divorce? Jesus’ words were, “I will go . . .” Will you go to that soul in need?

Who is grieving? Who needs mercy?

And are there those in your village, your town, your city who are hungry? Is there something God is calling you and others to do together? I say others because a group of dedicated individuals working together can make an exponentially more significant impact.

And I love that story of the friends removing tiles. The friends brought their tools and went to work! Friends voluntarily working together for the good of another. Such a powerful concept.

Serving communities in Christ's name is the mission of Adventist Community Services (ACS). Let's take inventory. Please get in groups of three or four *[will vary depending on size of audience]* and discuss a few questions:

1. **What as Adventists are we already doing in *[name your village, town, city where your church is located]* to serve those in need?** Or re-phrased, if our church disappeared tomorrow, would anyone notice?

[If your church has one or more ACS ministries, an alternative could be to ask a leader to give a brief report with the stats and a two-minute human interest story.]

An important thing to think about is how well do we know the needs of our community? Are we regularly checking with the city leaders and those already "in the trenches" with other organizations to discover the unmet needs?

Another question for your group:

2. **What do you think are needs in our community, and which ones are not being met?** *[Give time for groups to discuss and then ask for at least a few groups to report back depending on number of people in attendance.]*

And the last question:

3. **What talents and resources has God given us in this church that could possibly meet one or more of these community needs?** *[Allow another two minutes.]*

We cannot do everything, but is there something more – feeding, clothing, repairing, uplifting, educating, and the list goes on – that God is asking us to do out of our love for Him? Is God calling us through Adventist Community Services to do something more?

“Many feel that it would be a great privilege to visit the scenes of Christ’s life on earth, to walk where He trod, to look upon the lake beside which He loved to teach, and the hills and valleys on which His eyes so often rested. But we need not go to Nazareth, to Capernaum, or to Bethany, in order to walk in the steps of Jesus. We shall find His footprints beside the sickbed, in the hovels of poverty, in the crowded alleys of the great cities, and in every place where there are human hearts in need of consolation.”²

“As Jesus passed through the towns and cities He was like a vital current, diffusing life and joy wherever He went. We are to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and comfort the suffering and afflicted. We are to minister to the despairing, and to inspire hope in the hopeless.”³

Matthew 22:37-40 records the words of Jesus,

“‘Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.” NIV

If we truly love God, we will express it by loving our neighbors – that is the example Jesus gave us. And when we truly love our neighbors, it expresses our love for God. May we be faithful!

² MH 105.5

³ MH 106.1