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Luke 4:38-44
Welcome to Cornerstone
“Gospel Deeds”
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Introduction:

1. What makes a new church grow?
2. Most new churches grow fast the first couple years of ministry, but then their growth slows.
3. New churches grow so much because they're outward focused and intent on reaching their communities.
4. What exactly does “outward focused” mean—what are they doing that helps them grow?

Show and discuss “2000-2010 Denominational Family Attendance Growth”

5. I was at a church planter's conference where the speaker, David T. Olson, shared this chart.
6. In the 1920s American churches began arguing about what matters more, evangelism or social justice.
7. This led to conservative churches caring about evangelism and liberal churches caring about service.
8. So what are the “baptists” and the “3 sisters” churches doing that the rest of us are missing—BGC/Converge (+21%), Evangelical Covenant Church (+33%), and Evangelical Free Church (+28%)?
9. In the 1920s, these denominations were filled with Swedish people who didn't speak English.
10. Instead of arguing, they realized God wants us to both evangelize and serve (church plant too).

A gospel-centered church that changes lives through sharing the message of Jesus Christ in word and deed

(As I explained last week, our vision comes from Jesus' vision for his life and ministry.)

(If we want to grow, we need to do ministry Christ's way, focusing on both gospel words and deeds.)

I. Jesus cares for people's physical needs. (**Read Luke 4:38-39**)

A. Jesus cares for the physical wellbeing of people. (v. 38-39a)

- a. Simon Peter is one of Jesus' disciples, he was married, and his mother-in-law was sick.
- b. Luke's account says she was sick with a “high fever” instead of just a “fever” (Mk 1:30, Mt 8:14)
- c. Jesus doesn't treat her medically; instead he “rebukes” the fever and she's cured instantaneously.
- d. Luke highlights that “she got up at once” to emphasize Jesus' absolute power over sickness.

(Jesus cares about the physical wellbeing of people.)

(How does Simon's mother-in-law act and what does it tell us?)

B. Because Jesus cares for us, we should care for others. (v. 39b)

- a. When it says she “began to wait on them” it means she “began to minister to them.” (serve food)
- b. The word for “table waiter” or “minister” is where we get the word Deacon (Deakoneo = to serve)
- c. At Cornerstone, the way we do ministry is Elder Led and Deacon Served.

Deacons are servants and leaders of ministries who support the work of the church and the vision and mission of the Elders. Deacons are people who have a heart for service and care for others. Deacons allow Elders to focus on spiritual leadership and church vision with the confidence that the needs of the congregation will be met. (Deacon Job Description)

- d. They oversee finance, B&G, IT, but most important task is “direct care”
- e. They are tasked with caring for the poor, widowed, orphans, foreigners, food, etc.
- f. The early church set aside Deacons to care for church needs (Acts 6, 1 Tim 3).

(Deacons help the church grow as we care for each other inside the church.)

- C. We care first for Cornerstone people and we care deeply for Westford people.
 - a. The first story (v. 38-39) shows Jesus caring for his people.
 - b. The second story (v. 40-41) shows Jesus caring for all people.

“And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones *who is my disciple*, truly I tell you, that person will certainly not lose their reward.” (Matthew 10:42, c.f. 25:31-46 NIV)

- c. But remember Jesus also feed the 5000 (Mt 14:13-21) and the 4000 (Mt 15:29-39).
- d. We need to serve each other well before we can serve the world well (Jn 13:35).

(One of our values is “Outreach - We serve others and share the gospel.”)

- D. At Cornerstone, we’re trying to serve our community and each other.
 - a. At the July 4th Chelmsford Common fair we raised funds for the Westford Council on Aging.
 - b. This past week we hosted Live for Liv in our building (working to end domestic violence).
 - c. On October 31st, we’re hosting a Trunk or Treat in our parking lot for the Westford community.
 - d. These aren’t big accomplishments, but they’re a step in the right direction.
 - e. Connections, Worship, Children's, and Small Groups are all examples of serving each other.
 - f. If you’re going to be a part of this church, you need to serve.

(Jesus cares for people’s physical needs and he expects us to do the same.)

(This next story shows us Jesus cares for the whole person.)

II. Jesus cares for people’s spiritual needs. (**Read Luke 4:40-41**)

- A. Jesus cares for the spiritual wellbeing of people. (v. 40-41a)
 - a. During the hot day, Jesus is with Peter’s family, but that evening he goes out to help the masses.
 - b. These aren’t his immediate followers (church members) but crowds (Westford community)
 - c. Two words tell us Jesus cared for each personally and individually—“hands” and “one.”
 - d. The Ritz Carlton Motto is “We are Ladies and Gentlemen serving Ladies and Gentlemen.”
 - e. We want you to feel welcomed and cared for so that you’ll consider your spiritual need.
 - f. Jesus cares for their physical needs, so that he can meet their spiritual needs (cast out demons)
 - g. We all have a sin problem, and Jesus is the only one who has the power to deal with it (gospel).
- B. Jesus cares for people on his own terms (v. 41b).
 - a. Notice that the demons try to say “You are the Son of God!” but Jesus quiets them.
 - b. Why wouldn’t Jesus just let them verify that he is indeed God?
 - c. The “Son of God” is a Messianic title and a highly political term.
 - d. If the crowds knew he was the Messiah, they would challenge the Roman rulers.

- e. Jesus revealed himself and his kingdom on his own terms (king who serves, we do same).

(Jesus cares for people's physical and spiritual needs.)

(How are we, as follower of Jesus, as "Jesus people", supposed to act?)

III. Jesus people care for the needs of others. (**Read Luke 4:42-44**)

(I'm not talking about Jesus People USA, from the 1970s Jesus Movement.).

(This is my big idea!)

A. Jesus people care for the needs of others.

- a. In order to do this well, we need to follow the example of Jesus.
- b. The next morning, he went away to a "solitary" (desert/wilderness) place and prayed.
- c. He needed to get away with God so he could do what God wanted him to do.
- d. When the people try to make him their king, he tells them it's not all about them.
- e. Jesus' vision is to proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God to "other towns"

(Jesus people care for the needs of others.)

B. At Cornerstone, God is calling us to care for our community.

- a. The temptation is to hide in these walls, but Jesus came for "other towns".
- b. Westford is our "other town"—who we are called to share the gospel with and serve.
- c. One of the reasons we have a Saturday service is so we can serve the needs of our town better.
- d. Notice how Luke seems to parallel Jesus' "gospel proclamation" with healing and exorcisms.
- e. Jesus heals Peter's mother-in-law and rebukes demons and says it's all gospel.
- f. When you and I serve others in the name of Christ, it's all gospel.
- g. We need good words to explain the gospel, but good deeds show its power.

(Jesus people care for the needs of others.)

Conclusion:

1. I want to close by asking a question... is it worth it?
2. It is worth it to try and serve each other, Westford, the world?
3. Any time you try to love each other or love people outside these walls, it get's messy.
4. The Bible tells us that Jesus will one day serve his servants.

Luke 12:37 says, "It will be good for those servants whose master finds them watching when he comes. Truly I tell you, he will dress himself to serve, will have them recline at the table and will come and wait on them." (NIV)

Our vision is to be... *A gospel-centered church that changes lives through sharing the message of Jesus Christ in word and deed*

*Jesus people care for the needs of others.

Benediction: 2 Thessalonians 2:16–17 (NIV) — 16 May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, 17 encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word.