

# Savior Behavior

## Seeing Serving as Saving

August 20, 2023

Today we're trying to save the world, by serving our Savior. Because, as a bumper sticker pointed out on my way home last Sunday, "Y'all need Jesus!" And accent *aside*, I couldn't agree more! But it made me wonder, where's the *follow up* sticker that *also* explains exactly *where* to find Him? Pointing out our *problem* only gets us *halfway* home! *Somebody* needs to actually *serve* the solution! And seeing as that's *our* job, I gotta ask: **How do you share Jesus?**

Cuz, if a job's worth *doing*, it's worth doing *right* – and as we saw Last week, doing *our* job *right* means *prioritizing* our calling *over* our career and fulfilling our *passion* and *purpose* by serving *others* with our God-given *gifts*. Like we read:



Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the duty of all mankind.

[And remember what that means?] – Ecclesiastes 12:13



The *entire law* is fulfilled in keeping this *one* command: "Love your neighbor as yourself." – Galatians 5:14 NIV

So... *y'know*, love others to serve them. "**Well sure, but what does that really mean?**" Great question! Let's see what Jesus says:



[To love others, Jesus clarifies:] My command is *this*: Love each other as I have loved you. [Um, okay, but can you be *more specific?*] – John 15:12 NIV



As the Father has loved Me, so have I loved you [And note that 'so' means 'how' He loved, not 'how much'. Cuz *now* we need to know 'how' the Father loved if we're *ever* gonna get an answer!] – John 15:9 NIV



[And we've all heard that *Father*] God so loved the world [meaning 'here's how' He loved the world:] that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did *not* send His Son into the world to *condemn* the world, but to save the world through Him. – John 3:16-17 NIV

So, to recap: if *we're* supposed to love *others* like *Jesus*, and *He* loved like the *Father*, and the *Father* loved by *sending* *Jesus* to *save* the world – what should *our* love look like? **Saving others!** No wonder *Jesus*, *savior*, and *salvation* are all forms of the *same* root word 'save'! *Saving* is love's *priority* #1 when something is in danger; and **y'all need Jesus because y'all in danger!** *Every one of us* is in the middle of a life-long *duel* with *death* itself! And on our own, *every one of us* is *doomed* to *defeat*! So *every one of us* needs someone to *step in* and *save* us. But *none of us* have ever accomplished that feat apart from *Jesus*. Hence, *y'all need Jesus*.

So, for *us*, **loving others means doing whatever it takes to get them in contact with Him** – so *He* can *save* *them*. But – *our* part can be played *many* different ways. And *some* work. Some *don't*.

So **what's your approach?** Cuz we gotta do *something!* **Saving others isn't an option, it's our job!**

It's like the young guy who wanted to work as an usher over at the theater in the mall. In his interview, the manager asked him, "**So, what would you do if a fire broke out?**" And the guy answered, "**Oh – don't you worry about me. I'd get out okay.**"



We can't be *that guy!* If you're ever asked, "**What would you do if the world ended tomorrow?**" – your answer better not be "**Don't worry about me. I'd be okay.**" Cuz as Christians, **it's not enough to be saved, we gotta get others out also!** That's what *evangelism* ought to be *all about!*



In fact, if it's done *right*, **sharing Jesus should be an inspiring and heroic life-saving love-story like Titanic.** It's only when we do it *wrong* that it becomes a *selfish, abrasive, or condescending* story like some movie *no one* would ever pay to go see!



So, to do our duty *right*, we need to assess the situation of the *others* right where we've been stationed and start working on saving *their* lives! And if you want an easy-to-remember rule of thumb on the right approach:



Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus – Philippians 2:3-5 NIV



Don't *overthink* your actions, **just follow the Leader!** Learn the story where:

He made Himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, – Philippians 2:7 NIV

And you'll naturally get to know the mindset of our Savior and become equipped with *instincts* to:

Follow God's example as dearly loved children and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us. – Ephesians 5:1-2 NIV

And once we're able to maintain that mindset, we can lead others by example, the way Paul says:

Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ. – 1 Corinthians 11:1 NIV

For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, [Cuz like Jesus, us and Paul have a job to be a servant of all] so that they may be saved. – 1 Corinthians 10:33 NIV

*Examples* and illustrations are *everything* when teaching *humans*; cuz *us kids* like pictures in our books! **When it comes to trusting the truth of a real-world story we wanna see it to believe it!**

And because God *knows* about our near-sighted human handicap, His plan is perfect: **Show it to them!** Give *them* an up-close look at the *power* and *process* of Jesus' life-saving love story by *reflecting* His 'Savior behavior' in *your* life! And that means monitoring how we mirror His mindset daily. Cuz there's three key areas of Jesus' approach that are hard for humans, but critical to an effective example; how we **engage, encourage, and endure!**

And because first things come first, we should always **intentionally engage others**. Just like our Savior did! Jesus walked and talked with people non-stop to *share* and *show* the message of God's *love* and *salvation*. And He did it *differently* depending on what *each* situation *demand*ed. So to follow His example, **we also need to reach out for real relationships**. Like He said:

Whoever comes to Me I will never drive away. [And Paul adds:] – John 6:37 NIV

Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you. – Romans 15:7 NIV

Because that builds trust in your *intentions*, which is crucial to getting others interested in your *example*. So **hear them out to help them out**. That's the only way to *find* out what's keeping them from their Savior. And it's step one of working to give them what they need to see to be saved.



To answer *before* listening – that is folly and shame. – Proverbs 18:13 NIV

**So really listen. And really care.** This is no mere *mortal* you're talking to – but one of God's eternal kids who is lost in the wilderness! So treat them like you would any frightened child in the wild; be calm, careful, and comforting. Develop a rapport and **make them see that you see them**:



[And adjust your approach accordingly, like Paul's example:] To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some. – 1 Corinthians 9:22 NIV



**To engage with any effect, others need to hear you!** And that happens when they *trust* you. And that happens when *you* hear *them*! Which means **it's our job to hear their story so they'll hear their Savior!**



For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved" How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in Him of whom they have never heard? – Romans 10:13-15 ESV

So engage in a real relationship to start a real dialogue, but *then*, **always aim at encouraging others**. *Jesus* spoke words of inspiration and *hope* to *all* the *lost* and *needy*. And even in *rebuke*, His talks were always *aimed* at getting others to see there *was* a way *out* of death. And *that* focus keeps *our example* as *positive* as possible, *regardless* of *who* we're talking to. Like Peter says:

Always be prepared to give an answer to *everyone* who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, – 1 Peter 3:15 NIV

Back in 1909, Vancouver, BC spent a fortune on a brand-new fancy pants ambulance and on its first trip around town, it hit and killed a random rich guy on vacation. And his body was the first to be transported in this life-saving innovation! *Yikes!* Well similarly, if we're not focused on *how* we do *what* we're trying to do, **even our intention to save lives can kill!**

Remember **you're sharing Good News, so act like it!** If you want to have an *impact*, encourage others by giving them *good reasons* to raise their hopes. Listen to how your Savior speaks:

I have said these things to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world. – John 16:33

Has anyone here ever had a Tony Chocolonely bar? Was it because of *my wife*? I'm pretty sure she's responsible for forty percent of their sales because listening to *her endorsement* of that sweet sea-salt caramel confection is *aggressively irresistible!* And that's because **our testimony is a compelling retelling of our true story.** And every believer being saved has got an incredible and encouraging story of how they overcame death because our Example overcame the world!



And the same way my wife compels us to agree on *chocolate*, Paul reminds us that encouragement should lead everyone to share the *Savior* mindset:

Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ ... then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. – Philippians 2:1-2 NIV



**But that *doesn't* happen overnight!** Even our most passionate pleas and encouraging endorsements take time to sink in. And Paul reminds us:



Everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope. – Romans 15:4 NIV



Scripture is the source for the first-person testimony of *our* ultimate example; and His story is all *about* encouragement... and *endurance*. Cuz **it's when we want to quit that we need encouragement most!**

So Jesus showed us ultimate *endurance* to *keep us encouraged* when we're at the end of any rope.

[We just have to hang in there,] Looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before *Him* endured the cross – Hebrews 12:2 NIV

His example was intensely *inspiring* because it was strong and steady from start to finish. And if we want *others* to see *that strength*, **our example needs endure to the very end.**

Back when I was an idiot teenager, I made some big *mistakes* and got in some big *trouble*. And in the year I was put on probation, strangely, *many* of my 'best friends' *disappeared*. And I got *angry* and *apathetic* as I realized how *self-serving* some people could be. But, in that *same* year, some of my grade-school 'goodie-two-shoes' friends wrote my mom a *letter* to ask how I was cuz they were *worried* about the crowd I was with. And I realized how truly *caring* some people could be. And that was more powerful, cuz **staying steady stands out in a world of compromise and quitting.**

And once I was finally saved, I could clearly see the *work* of every person who *engaged*, *encouraged*, and *endured* me – just to show *me* that I needed Jesus... *and* where to find Him! So:

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people – Galatians 6:9-10 NIV

And **there's nothing you can do that's better than saving their life!** So in all your relationships, **hear them out, egg them on, and keep it up** so *others* can catch sight of the *Savior* that saved *you!*

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Father God, thank You for loving me in spite of my sin; forgive me and cleanse me by the sacrifice of Your Son, my Savior; and free me and lead me by Your Spirit and Word, as I seek to trust and follow Jesus Christ, as the Lord of my life. Amen.