

God's Mission My Mission

Mission to the Needy

Lesson #8 for November 25, 2023

Scriptures: Luke 5:17-26; John 5:1-9; 15:13; Deuteronomy 10:19; Leviticus 23:22; Matthew 25:34-40.

1. In this lesson we will look at many people who had various kinds of needs. God is calling us to help others and in some cases for others to help us. This work can be very challenging. Sometimes, Jesus completely healed all the sick in a village. We do not have that ability. Who are the people in real need in our communities? Consider the story of the paralyzed man who was brought to Jesus and let down through the roof to Him.

Luke 5:20-26: ²⁰When Jesus saw how much faith they had, he said to the man, "Your sins are forgiven, my friend." ²¹The teachers of the Law and the Pharisees began to say to themselves, "Who is this man who speaks such blasphemy! God is the only one who can forgive sins!"

²² Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them, "Why do you think such things? ²³Is it easier to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'? ²⁴I will prove to you, then, that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins." [*Son of Man* means Human being.] So he said to the paralyzed [*sic-Br*] man, "I tell you, get up, pick up your bed, and go home!"

²⁵ At once the man got up in front of them all, took the bed he had been lying on, and went home, praising God. ²⁶They were all completely amazed! Full of fear, they praised God, saying, "What marvellous [*sic-Br*] things we have seen today!"—American Bible Society. (1992). *The Holy Bible: The Good News Translation** (2nd ed., Luke 5:20-26). New York: American Bible Society [abbreviated as *Good News Bible*].^{††} [What did the Pharisees say?][‡]

2. **In order to fully understand the implications of this story, we must understand their beliefs about sickness. It was the common belief that sickness was a direct result of some sin committed either by the person himself or by his/her parents. Therefore, it was their understanding that in order for the sickness to be healed, the sin must be forgiven. That is why Jesus first forgave the man, then healed him.**

John 9:1-2: ¹ As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man who had been born blind.

²His disciples asked him, "Teacher, whose sin caused him to be born blind? Was it his own or his parents' sin?"—*Good News Bible*.*

3. Do the people in our communities need help physically? Emotionally? Financially? Even socially? Could we, as members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church reach out to those people? Has God called us to do that? Can we do it safely?
4. What can we learn from the story of the paralyzed man?

[From the Bible study guide=BSG:] **By bringing their friend to Jesus, these men took on the responsibility to care for him.** God is calling us to be like this man's friends—to lead the needy to Jesus Christ. This work requires faith, action, patience, and a willingness, if need be, to be unconventional.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Sunday, November 19.^{††}

5. Who was it that had faith in this case? Was it the men who carried the man to Jesus? Or, the paralyzed man himself? Or, both? All of them! What these men did seems quite amazing to us. Could we do something like that today?

[From the writings of Ellen G. White=EGW:] **Do not wait to be told your duty. Open your eyes and see who are around you;** make yourselves acquainted with the helpless, afflicted, and needy. Hide not yourselves from them, and seek not to shut out their needs. Who gives the proofs mentioned in James, of possessing pure religion, untainted with selfishness or corruption? Who are anxious to do all in their power to aid in the great plan of salvation?—Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*,* vol. 2, 29.2.†‡ [See James 1:27.]‡

[BSG:] Jesus Himself demonstrates how to help the helpless and is calling us to do the same. **First, we become their friends; then we learn about their needs; and finally, we lead them to Jesus, who is the only One who can help them.** This is what the men in this story did; we need to do likewise in whatever situation we find ourselves. Help lead people to the only One who can save them: Jesus.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Sunday, November 19.†‡

6. Have you acquired any friends specifically for the purpose of leading them to Jesus?
7. Consider another story from the life of Jesus.

John 5:1-10: ¹ After this, Jesus went to Jerusalem for a religious festival. ²Near the Sheep Gate in Jerusalem there is a pool with five porches; in Hebrew it is called Bethzatha. ³A large crowd of sick people were lying in the porches—the blind, the lame, and the paralysed. [sic-Br] [footnote: Some manuscripts add verses 3b-4: *They were waiting for the water to move, because every now and then an angel of the Lord went down into the pool and stirred up the water. The first sick person to go into the pool after the water was stirred up was healed from whatever disease he had.*] ⁵A man was there who had been ill for 38 years. ⁶Jesus saw him lying there, and he knew that the man had been ill for such a long time; so he asked him, “Do you want to get well?”

⁷ The sick man answered, “Sir, I have no one here to put me in the pool when the water is stirred up; while I am trying to get in, somebody else gets there first.” [It was true that the people believed that an angel stirred the water; but, it was not an angel that did that.]

⁸ Jesus said to him, “Get up, pick up your mat, and walk.” ⁹Immediately the man got well; he picked up his mat and started walking.

The day this happened was a Sabbath, ¹⁰so the Jewish authorities told the man who had been healed, “This is a Sabbath, and it is against our Law for you to carry your mat.”—*Good News Bible*.*†‡§ [Jesus knew all of this.]‡

[BSG:] Ellen G. White provides a five-step process of Jesus’ method in how to minister, especially to those in need.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Monday, November 20.‡

[EGW:] Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, "Follow Me."—Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing** 143.3.‡

[BSG:] **First**, we must mingle with the helpless, spend time getting to know them, and understand their needs with the intention of doing good for them....

Second, we need to show sympathy. This can be challenging.... God is calling us to show sympathy without expecting anything in return.

The **third** step is to minister to their needs. This involves more than just words. It takes action to minister to the needs of a friend or a stranger....

The **fourth** step is winning their confidence. When we minister to people, when we help them, they will learn to trust us and what we say to them. So, when we talk to them about Jesus, they would be more open to listen. Jesus didn't want just to heal them physically; He wanted them to have eternal life in Him (*see John 10:10*).

The **last** step is to help lead them to Jesus, an act that requires faith from both you and the one whom you help.

We generally can't do the kind of miracles that Jesus did. But what are ways that we can still minister to those who need help?—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Monday, November 20.†‡§

8. What groups of people closely resemble these examples that we have of Jesus's interactions? The topic of immigrants and refugees has become a hotly debated subject, especially because there are so many of them today.
9. In our day and our culture, it is so easy to develop a group of friends with whom we share many ideas as well as a common language and culture and avoid trying to reach out to others. Even their food might be different from ours! But, all the way through the Bible, the message is: Reach out to those in need, including foreigners.

Deuteronomy 10:19: "So then, show love for those foreigners, because you were once foreigners in Egypt."—*Good News Bible*.* [See also Leviticus 23:22.]‡

Romans 12:13: Share your belongings with your needy fellow-Christians, and open your homes to strangers.—*Good News Bible*.*

10. Jesus and His parents were briefly refugees in Egypt as noted in Matthew 2.

Matthew 2:13-15: ¹³ After they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph and said, "Herod will be looking for the child in order to kill him. So get up, take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you to leave."

¹⁴ Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and left during the night for Egypt, ¹⁵where he stayed until Herod died. This was done to make what the Lord had said through the prophet come true, "I called my Son out of Egypt."—*Good News Bible*.* [Did Joseph's other children (Matthew 13:55-56) go with them? What do we know about Jesus's sisters?]‡

11. What are the biggest challenges of trying to reach out to immigrants and refugees in our society? Always begin with prayer.
12. In Luke 4:18, we read about when Jesus returned to Nazareth sometime after He had become famous for His miracles and His teachings.

Luke 4:18: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has chosen me to bring good news to the **poor**.
He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the **captives**
and recovery of sight to the **blind**;
to set free the **oppressed**.”—*Good News Bible*.*†

13. We need to realize that the entire crowd of people listening to Jesus were waiting for Him to reach the part which they loved as it says in Isaiah 61:2, “And defeat their enemies [the Romans].”† They did not care about the poor, the captives, the blind, or the oppressed!
14. How often do we seek new friends primarily for the purpose of winning them to God?
15. We must get over our discomfort with other people’s customs and ways.
16. Try to imagine yourself as a refugee in some country which you have never been to before. How would you feel if someone befriended you and was nice and helped you in many ways to make your life more comfortable and safer?
17. Jesus took His message of being nice to widows, children, and foreigners all the way.

Matthew 25:34-40: ³⁴ “Then the King will say to the people on his right, ‘Come, you that are blessed by my Father! Come and possess the kingdom which has been prepared for you ever since the creation of the world. ³⁵I was hungry and you fed me, thirsty and you gave me a drink; I was a stranger and you received me in your homes, ³⁶naked and you clothed me; I was sick and you took care of me, in prison and you visited me.’

³⁷ “The righteous will then answer him, ‘When, Lord, did we ever see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you a drink? ³⁸When did we ever see you a stranger and welcome you in our homes, or naked and clothe you? ³⁹When did we ever see you sick or in prison, and visit you?’ ⁴⁰The King will reply, ‘I tell you, **whenever you did this for one of the least important of these members of my family, you did it for me!**’”—*Good News Bible*.*† [How could that be applied in our day? Would it be safe?]‡

18. Some of you are going to tell me that there is no end to the needs of people in our world. It just seems overwhelming. We do not have the ability that Christ had to walk through villages and heal every single sick person!
19. We do not have the ability to live through that absolutely horrendous final week of Jesus’s life on this earth which demonstrated the cruelty of Satan and the truth about sin and its results. But, God has not given us that challenge.
20. Wouldn’t it be possible for us to just pick out one or maybe two individuals and try to reach out to them? **Would you dare to pray to ask God to lead you to select some people who need you right now?**
21. You may live in an area surrounded by well-to-do people who are quite comfortable. Our lesson today suggests we do this:

[BSG:] Challenge: Learn about foreigners or non-Christians who live in your country. Joshuaprojects.net is a good place to survey unreached people groups in your culture. [See <https://joshuaproject.net/countries/US>]

Challenge Up: Identify someone within your sphere of influence. Begin regularly praying for the person after answering the following questions:

- Is this person my friend—according to Jesus’ model of friendship?
- Do I know the needs of his or her life?
- How can I lead him or her to Jesus for healing?—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Thursday, November 23.‡

22. Ellen White employed a nurse among her full-time staff. This was partly because she was constantly reaching out to people who were ill or in need and welcoming them into her household to be cared for until they were better. She did that in our day!
23. There are many stories of Jesus reaching out and that included to people from other cultures and language groups.

Mark 5:1-20: ¹ Jesus and his disciples arrived on the other side of Lake Galilee, in the territory of Gerasa. ²As soon as Jesus got out of the boat, he was met by a man [or two men wrote Matthew] who came out of the burial caves there. This man had an evil spirit in him ³and lived among the tombs....

⁶ He was some distance away when he saw Jesus; so he ran, fell on his knees before him, ⁷and screamed in a loud voice, “Jesus, Son of the Most High God! [That language means *a divine Person*.] What do you want with me? For God’s sake, I beg you, don’t punish me!” ⁸(He said this because Jesus was saying, “Evil spirit, come out of this man!”)

⁹ So Jesus asked him, “What is your name?”

The man answered, “My name is ‘Mob’—there are so many of us!” ¹⁰And he kept begging Jesus not to send the evil spirits out of that region.

¹¹ There was a large herd of pigs near by, feeding on a hillside. ¹²So the spirits begged Jesus, “Send us to the pigs, and let us go into them.” [Who was speaking?] ¹³He let them go, and the evil spirits went out of the man and entered the pigs. The whole herd—about 2,000 pigs in all—rushed down the side of the cliff into the lake and was drowned. [Did the Jews refuse to use that water? Or, fish from the lake? If not, why not?]

¹⁴ The men who had been taking care of the pigs ran away and spread the news in the town and among the farms. People went out to see what had happened, ¹⁵and when they came to Jesus, they saw the man who used to have the mob of demons in him. He was sitting there, clothed and in his right mind; and they were all afraid. ¹⁶Those who had seen it told the people what had happened to the man with the demons, and about the pigs.

¹⁷ So they asked Jesus to leave their territory.

¹⁸ As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had had the demons begged him, “Let me go with you!”

¹⁹ But Jesus would not let him. Instead, he told him, “**Go back home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you and how kind he has been to you.**” [Be a missionary.]

²⁰ **So the man left and went all through the Ten Towns, telling what Jesus had done for him. And all who heard it were amazed.—Good News Bible.**^{†‡} [Compare Matthew 8:28-34.][‡]

[EGW:] **But the purposes of Christ were not thwarted. He allowed the evil spirits to destroy the herd of swine as a rebuke to those Jews who were raising these unclean beasts for the sake of gain. Had not Christ restrained the demons, they would have plunged into the sea, not only the swine, but also their keepers and owners. The preservation of both the keepers and the owners was due alone to His power, mercifully exercised for their deliverance.** Furthermore, this event was permitted to take place that the disciples might witness the cruel power of Satan upon both man and beast.... **And though Jesus Himself departed, the men so marvelously delivered, remained to declare the mercy of their Benefactor.**—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy** 515.1.^{†‡} [Those men became missionaries to the Gentiles of that whole region! When Jesus later returned, thousands came to listen to Him. See Matthew 15:32-39 and Mark 8:1-10.][‡]

[EGW:] **Men and women are not fulfilling the design of God, when they simply express affection for their own family circle ... while they exclude those from their love whom they could comfort and bless by relieving their necessities....**

When the Lord bids us do good for others outside our home, he does not mean that our affection for home shall become diminished, and that we shall love our kindred or our country less because he desires us to extend our sympathies. **But we are not to confine our affection and sympathy within four walls, and inclose the blessing that God has given us so that others will not be benefited with us in its enjoyment.**—Ellen G. White, *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*,* October 15, 1895, par. 3-4.^{†‡}

24. **Are we prepared to reach out to those who are not in our comfort zone?**

25. In Acts 1:8, the disciples were given a mandate that extends even to us to witness throughout the entire world.

Acts 1:8: “But when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, you will be filled with power, and you will be witnesses for me in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”—*Good News Bible*.*

26. What would the members of your church say about Jesus if they heard that He was eating and drinking with gluttons and drunkards? (See Matthew 11:19.)

27. Should Seventh-day Adventists participate in celebrations with non-Adventist groups even when they are doing certain things with which we are not comfortable, like drinking?

28. Let us be honest. There are many, many references even in the Old Testament about reaching out to widows, orphans, and foreigners.

Deuteronomy 15:4: “The LORD your God will bless you in the land that he is giving you. Not one of your people will be poor.”—*Good News Bible*.*

Deuteronomy 15:11: “There will always be some Israelites who are poor and in need, and so I command you to be generous to them.”—*Good News Bible*.*

[BSG:] How do we reconcile these two verses (*Deut. 15:4 and Deut. 15:11*)? What is the problem here? How can we solve this apparent contradiction? In essence, the Bible is telling us that because God can provide, He wants to use us in helping those in need, as Jesus did. The biblical tradition, as a whole, does not regard poverty as a “normal” part of life but as an evil exception to the divine plan. What is meant to be “normal” is the concern that moves people to show kindness to those in need.—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 106.†§

[EGW:] God imparts His blessing to us that we may impart to others. When we ask Him for our daily bread, He looks into our hearts to see if we will share the same with those more needy than ourselves.—Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*,* vol. 6, 283.4.‡

29. Most of us have full-time jobs, doing something which is hopefully beneficial to society. Not many of us have the privilege of traveling to different villages and cities and reaching out to the most needy and most neglected as Jesus did. To what extent are we to follow His example? How were Jesus and His disciples supported? (See Luke 8:1-3.)
30. Seventh-day Adventists have always been most successful in evangelizing the poor and needy since it is easier for them to recognize their problems and accept help. But, **Ellen White said we must also reach out to the rich and successful.** Are we doing that?

[EGW:] **The intelligent, the refined, are altogether too much passed by. The hook is not baited to catch this class, and ways and methods are not prayerfully devised to reach them with truth that is able to make them wise unto salvation.** Most generally the fashionable, the wealthy, the proud, understand by experience that happiness is not to be secured by the amount of money that they possess, or by costly edifices, and ornamental furniture and pictures. They want something they have not. But this class are attracted toward each other, and it is hard to find access to them; and because of this many are perishing in their sins who long for something that will give them rest and peace and quietude of mind. They need Jesus, the light of righteousness.—Ellen G. White, *Evangelism** 556.3.††

[EGW:] The life of Christ, the Lord of glory, is our example. He came from heaven, where all was riches and splendor; but He laid aside His royal crown, His royal robe, and clothed His divinity with humanity. Why? **That He might meet men where they were.** He did not rank Himself with the wealthy, the lordly of earth. The mission of Christ was to reach the very poor of earth.—Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to Ministers** 177.2.††

31. But, not everyone was happy about the work of Jesus. He was constantly being followed by the religious leaders, particularly the Pharisees, trying to find a way to condemn Him.

Mark 1:14-15: ¹⁴ **After John had been put in prison, Jesus went to Galilee and preached the Good News from God.** ¹⁵ “The right time has come,” he said,

“and the Kingdom of God is near! Turn away from your sins and believe the Good News!”—*Good News Bible*.*†

32. **Why do you think it was that when John the Baptist was arrested, Jesus moved His ministry from Judea to Galilee? Later, when John the Baptist was beheaded, Jesus left Galilee to work outside of Jewish territory? How are these events related?**

33. We are so fortunate to have the Gospel of Luke. As a Greek physician, he was much more kind in his talking about non-Jews and women. Women were definitely second-class citizens in the society in which Jesus lived. For that reason, Jesus went out of His way to be kind to them and to reach them. He reached out to women who were poor, outcast, sinners, widows, mothers, prostitutes, and otherwise oppressed, even women possessed by the Devil. Jesus had a former devil-possessed prostitute as one of His closest associates! (See Luke 8:1-3.)

34. Jesus shocked His disciples by His relationship with the Samaritan woman at Sychar. (John 4:1-26) Also, by His encounter with the woman caught in adultery. (John 8:1-11)

[BSG:] The way Jesus handled the situation of the woman caught in adultery and the situations of many other women indicates His interest in relieving and restoring the dignity of women and demonstrates that His love has no preference toward any class of individuals.... Look at the following examples of women who were recipients of the Savior’s love: the Canaanite or Syrophenician woman (*Matt. 15:21–28, Mark 7:24–30*); Jesus’ mother (*John 19:25–27*); Martha and Mary, whom Jesus encouraged (*John 11:17–37*); and the widow of Nain, whose son Jesus raised from the dead (*Luke 7:11–17*). Jesus was anointed by a sinful woman and forgave her sins (*John 12:1–11, Matt. 26:6–13, Mark 14:3–9, Luke 7:36–50*); Jesus healed and dialogued with a sick woman (*Luke 8:43–48, Matt. 9:20–22, Mark 5:25–34*); women were cured from evil spirits and diseases by Jesus (*Luke 8:1–3*); Jesus healed a crippled woman (*Luke 13:10–13*); Jesus noticed the widow giving her offering (*Mark 12:41–44, Luke 21:1–4*); and Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene (*John 20:10–18*).—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 107.†§

35. Consider especially the challenging story about Mary Magdalene as recorded in John 20:10-18. It is one of the final stories about Jesus and women.

36. Why do you suppose Jesus, the Son of God, chose to send the gospel message of His resurrection to the “general conference committee,” using a woman known to be a former demon-possessed prostitute and sinner? She was the first person to the tomb.

37. Jesus seemed to go out of His way to reach, heal, and save people who were despised by the Jewish nation.

Luke 7:36-50: ³⁶ A Pharisee invited Jesus to have dinner with him, and Jesus went to his house and sat down to eat. ³⁷In that town was a woman who lived a sinful life. She heard that Jesus was eating in the Pharisee’s house, so she brought an alabaster jar full of perfume ³⁸and stood behind Jesus, by his feet, crying and wetting his feet with her tears. Then she dried his feet with her hair, kissed them, and poured the perfume on them. ³⁹When the Pharisee saw this, he said to himself, “If this man really were a prophet,

he would know who this woman is who is touching him; he would know what kind of sinful life she lives!" [Simon was both a Pharisee and a leper!]

⁴⁰ Jesus spoke up and said to him, "**Simon**, I have something to tell you."

"Yes, Teacher," he said, "tell me."

⁴¹ "There were two men who owed money to a moneylender," Jesus began. "One owed him 500 silver coins, and the other owed him fifty. ⁴²Neither of them could pay him back, so he cancelled the debts of both. Which one, then, will love him more?"

⁴³ "I suppose," answered **Simon**, "that it would be the one who was forgiven more."

"You are right," said Jesus. ⁴⁴Then he turned to the woman and said to **Simon**, "Do you see this woman? I came into your home, and you gave me no water for my feet, but she has washed my feet with her tears and dried them with her hair. ⁴⁵You did not welcome me with a kiss, but she has not stopped kissing my feet since I came. ⁴⁶You provided no olive oil for my head, but she has covered my feet with perfume. ⁴⁷I tell you, then, the great love she has shown proves that her many sins have been forgiven. But whoever has been forgiven little shows only a little love."

⁴⁸ Then Jesus said to the woman, "Your sins are forgiven."

⁴⁹ The others sitting at the table began to say to themselves, "Who is this, who even forgives sins?"

⁵⁰ But Jesus said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."—*Good News Bible*.*†† [Compare Mark 14:3-9.]‡

38. But, there is more to this story.

[EGW:] Christ might have extinguished every spark of hope in Mary's soul, but He did not. The Heart-searcher read the motives that led to her actions, and He also saw the spirit that prompted Simon's words. "Seest thou this woman?" He said to him; she is a sinner; "I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much; but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little. And He said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven."

Those present, thinking of **Lazarus, who had been raised from the dead by Christ, and who was at this time a guest in his uncle's house**, began to question, saying, "Who is this that forgiveth sins also?" But Christ continued, "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace."—Ellen G. White, *Signs of the Times*,* May 9, 1900, par. 14-15; *Daughters of God**† 239.3-4.††

Since Mary, Martha, and Lazarus were siblings, then Simon was Mary's uncle!

[EGW:] **Simon had led into sin the woman [his niece, Mary] he now despised. She had been deeply wronged by him....** But Simon felt himself more righteous than Mary, and Jesus desired him to see how great his guilt really was. He would show him that his sin was greater than hers, as much greater as a debt of five hundred pence exceeds a debt of fifty pence.—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages** 566.5.††

39. Mary was Simon's niece; he had led Mary into sin. Mary's life of sin probably began with that incest. That led her all the way to demon possession. (See *DA* 568; Luke 8:1-3.)

40. Jesus did not wait for people to come to Him; He reached out to people that He saw were in need.
41. Jesus's ministry of healing went far beyond what the Bible tells us; however, it must suffice to mention here what the inspired writers of the Gospels recorded for us. Many other sick people with varied illnesses were healed by the Great Physician.

[EGW:] **About them were whole villages where there was not a moan of sickness in any house; for He had passed through them, and healed all their sick. The mercy revealed in every act of His life testified to His divine anointing.**—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages** 241.1.†

42. Even after His death, the true followers of Jesus formed a community fellowship that everyone wanted to be a part of. It was not only in the areas of Judea and Galilee that this kind of fellowship of Christians proved to be very effective but also in other areas.

Acts 11:19-26: ¹⁹ Some of the believers who were scattered by the persecution which took place when Stephen was killed went as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, **telling the message to Jews only.** ²⁰**But other believers, who were from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and proclaimed the message to Gentiles also, telling them the Good News about the Lord Jesus.** ²¹The Lord's power was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord.

²² The news about this reached the church in Jerusalem, so they sent Barnabas to Antioch. ²³When he arrived and saw how God had blessed the people, he was glad and urged them all to be faithful and true to the Lord with all their hearts....

²⁵ Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul. ²⁶When he found him, he took him to Antioch, and for a whole year the two met with the people of the church and taught a large group. **It was at Antioch that the believers were first called Christians.** [At the time *Christian* was a derogatory term meaning those who follow a dead man.]—*Good News Bible*.*†

43. Jesus even complemented women who supported what they believed was right.

Mark 12:41-44: ⁴¹ As Jesus sat near the temple treasury, he watched the people as they dropped in their money. Many rich men dropped in a lot of money; ⁴²then a poor widow came along and dropped in two little copper coins, worth about a penny. ⁴³He called his disciples together and said to them, "I tell you that this poor widow put more in the offering box than all the others. ⁴⁴For the others put in what they had to spare of their riches; but she, poor as she is, put in all she had—she gave all she had to live on."—*Good News Bible*.*

44. ***How would such a woman be treated by your church? Do we have established mechanisms for reaching out to the poor and helping them not just spiritually but also financially and physically? Has God called us to do that?***

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