

2.12.12

## Walking Dusty...

teacher: Dan Crist

This week we were challenged with “How much is enough?” and the idea of being blind to the needs of the world. As you read *Walking Dusty*, please don’t think I’m bragging. There are many needs to which I’m still blind, and God is working hard to open my eyes, just like He did in this story:

When my husband and I were foster parents, we had a pastor share his concern about adopting a child “of color.” And while we were in the process of adopting, we had a Christian couple tell the story of an adoptive family and how heart-breaking their experience had been. “Are you sure you want to adopt?” they asked. In addition, we kept hearing how expensive adoption is. While that is often true, when we finally adopted our total cost for both boys altogether was around \$250!

Don’t get me wrong – I think all of these people were sincere in their concern for our family. But each time someone told me something that wasn’t encouraging, I wanted to scream: “What am I supposed to do with these kids, leave them in foster care? Should I overlook their need for a safe, loving family? I can’t do that!!” God had removed my blinders and I could not ignore the need any longer.

Please don’t misinterpret what I’m saying. I don’t believe we are all supposed to adopt, but we are each called to do something for orphans. (James 1:27) This could mean caring for foster and adoptive children by providing respite, meals, or support for their family. Around the world it could be financially supporting or volunteering at an orphan ministry. After studying James 1:27, the members of Platt’s church decided to contact social services to see what the need was for foster care. After finding out that 150 families were needed, 160 signed up. They read God’s Word, found a need, and then acted.

Extreme poverty, child abuse, lack of medical care, starvation, child soldiers, homeless youth, child labor, sex trafficking . . . to do nothing is unacceptable. Yet that is exactly what I am doing in some respects. But God is opening my eyes to needs that I didn’t even know existed. I’m overwhelmed! It’s impossible for me to fix all these problems! But Mother Teresa said, “If you can’t feed a hundred people, then feed just one.” I can do that, and if I’m honest I can do even more.

### **Questions to Consider:**

The Greatest Commandment is “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. And love your neighbor as yourself.” (Matthew 22:37, 39) Am I giving my time and money in order to earn my salvation and God’s love, or is it in response to what Jesus has already done for me? Serving the poor and helping the disadvantaged are not how we earn our salvation; it is evidence of our salvation. What is the difference? Are our motives pure?

Am I brave enough to ask God to break my heart like His . . . to let me see people as He sees them . . . to uncover blind spots and then do something about the “least of these”?

Dan said our things are not evil, but they are not to be our focus either – they are supposed to be used for God’s glory. What do I have that I am not using for His glory? What things do I have that are distracting me from God?

There are about 127,000 U.S. children waiting to be adopted. Since there are around 300,000 U.S. churches, that averages about two churches to every child! I’m sorry, but I have to ask . . . if we are to be doers and not just hearers of the Word (James 1:22-25), then why are there still kids waiting for a family to adopt them?!?

As God uncovers blind spots in my heart, am I bitter that He wants more of me, or grateful that He’s teaching me and wants to use me in more ways?

Platt writes that “nearly half the world struggling today to find food, water, and shelter” exists on \$2 or less per day. (p. 108) Sometimes when I hear that I justify their existence thinking their cost of living makes it not so hard to live on that meager amount. This should not be my focus! Instead I should realize how easy it is for me to spend \$2 on things I don’t need. What if I stopped frivolously spending \$2 or more here and there? What could be done with the money instead? How many lives could be saved? For about the price of taking my family to McDonald’s I can support an overseas ministry. Am I willing to live simply so that others may simply live?

What does Platt mean when he says the poor are powerless? (p. 109) Can this injustice be changed?

Is materialism a blind spot in American Christianity today? (p. 111)

When we pool our resources in our churches, what are our priorities? (p. 118) What are our family’s priorities? What are my community’s priorities?

Is God asking all of us to sell everything we have? (p. 120) Are we willing to if He asks?

Am I content? In what areas of my life am I discontent? Why? (p. 125)

Consider the example of John Wesley. “So why not simply begin a process of limiting and eliminating some of them? (meaning luxuries) Why not begin selling and giving away luxuries for the sake of the poor outside our gates? Why not begin operating under the idea that God has given us excess, not so we could have more, but so we could give more?” (p. 127)

“His final two questions challenged me to the core, not only as they pertained to reaching the unreached, but also as they related to caring for the poor. What would happen, I thought, if we stopped asking how much we could spare and started asking how much it was going to take?” (p. 130)

“The point is not simply to meet a temporary need or change a startling statistic; the point is to exalt the glory of Christ as we express the gospel of Christ through the radical generosity of our lives.” (p. 135) Do we get the point, or are we missing the point?

***This month's memory verse:*** "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you." Matthew 28: 19-20

***Additional verses:*** James 1:22-27, Colossians 3:16, 1 Corinthians 4:14, 2 Corinthians 8-9, 1 Timothy 6

Remember to read through Luke 12:13-21 and see additional verses on 'money' – separate pdf.

**Reminders:**

2.19.12 The Gathering at SHU at 10am!!! Radical – chapter 7

2.26.12 The Gathering at SHU at 10am!!! Radical – chapter 8 & 9

\*\*\* 4 the City Event . . . Serve & Bless the Catherine Cobb Center – more info TBA \*\*\*