

## Chat with the Children

- Before I went to Ethiopia in January I told everyone this story:
    - can you remember?
    - go through story, **5 slides**, again...
  - What is going on in this photo? Who needs help? How could you help?
  - **Who will I look out for this week?**
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## What do you do when asked for money?

- What do you do when asked for money?
  - beggar on the street? someone turning up at church, and you happen to be the one who meets them? maybe even someone at your door?
- Most of us will have a variety of reactions:
  - may feel generally uncomfortable, not sure how to respond, perhaps a bit threatened
  - a bit of us will want to be generous, to meet the need we see before us
  - a bit of us will **not** want to be generous, but wants to keep the money for ourselves!
  - and there will probably be a bit of us that will argue that giving money isn't the best response, since it doesn't really solve the person's problems (most people who ask for money may have a drink or drug dependency problem...)
    - *so maybe we give nothing, maybe we give something, maybe we seek to give something practical - food, electricity card, etc*
- That was something of the situation that Peter and John found themselves in as they approached the Temple:
  - asked for money, wondering how to respond
- Lets find out how they did respond!

## Responded to the felt need

- What was the beggar looking for?
  - money, obviously! Not healing....
- No social security system; pious pilgrims on their way into the Temple; duty of alms giving would make the Temple entrance a prime spot!
- Peter and John responded to his felt need:
  - when he asked for money, they didn't brush him off, they didn't walk past
  - rather, they engaged with him, gave him their attention, and so invited him to engage with them, give them his attention
- **They listened to him, gave him their attention**
- This was the first stage in all that subsequently unfolded:
  - and a stage we perhaps need to think about;
  - do we listen to the needs that there are around us?
  - do we hear what folk are concerned about in our community?
  - do we know what issues there are here in Fintry?
  - not what we think there are, but what issues there actually are?

## Responded to the deeper need

- But Peter and John didn't simply give the beggar the money he was looking for:
  - they did not meet his felt need.
- For they saw the whole person, all his needs, including his need for healing
- He probably couldn't conceive of that need being met, he couldn't envisage a situation where he would ever be anything other than a crippled beggar!
  - but such healing was possible in God's power, and would transform his life
  - no longer bound to sit and depend on other people's generosity;

- able now to fully participate in the life of the community, socially, physically, **economically**, indeed spiritually
- *(certainly some exclusions from Temple, priestly service, etc for the disabled)*
- In this case that offer of a truer help to meet a deeper need was accepted, with gladness and joy!
  - the power that heals is Jesus' ("in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk!")
  - and that praise that is given is to God - entered Temple as first response
- In like fashion we will offer to engage with the full-range of needs that people have:
  - maybe as simple as the food or power card for the person asking for money;
  - maybe to get alongside that person asking for money, and help them take responsibility for their situation so they don't end the week/month whatever on the edge?
  - maybe the discernment to see that a difficult neighbour is actually lonely, and offering friendship;
  - maybe the discernment to see that someone has a need for something they don't feel - perhaps education, perhaps social skills, perhaps dealing with past hurts, forgiving those who have hurt them... And suggest, encourage, support them in addressing that more underlying need - an **unfelt** need but which, appropriately addressed, will deeply impact their life!
- We may be working as individuals, as a church, or as those working in or alongside "secular" projects, but in each case we seek to meet a truer need, in the name of Jesus Christ!
  - *sometimes rejected... eg food not wanted, when offered instead of money*

## Responded to the whole need

- But Peter and John didn't stop there:
  - that's why we read the whole of the chapter, through to v.26 and not just up to v.10!
- The healing of the beggar, his praising of God, and the crowd that gathered opened the door for the deepest need of everyone present to be met:
  - notice what Peter did not do when the crowd gather: he didn't say, "who else is in need of healing?"
  - *that is absolutely not to belittle any ministry of healing, whether through services or praying with individuals*
  - but Peter saw that there was now an opportunity to speak not just of felt needs, nor even to meet deeper real needs, but to deal with **fundamental needs**
- The groundwork had been done, the opportunity was there, and so Peter spoke of people's need to respond in faith the Jesus.
  - as we saw when Peter preached on the day of Pentecost, the real answer is Jesus, whatever the question!
  - the prompt is that the faith that healed the beggar was faith in the name of Jesus Christ;
  - and so Peter asks the gathering crowd to respond themselves to this Jesus
- They perhaps don't have need of physical healing - though perhaps some did:
  - but they certainly all had need of spiritual healing;
  - they had all disowned Jesus, God's Holy and Righteous One;
  - and as a result of that rejection they were cut off from God, sick in their souls
- The only true healing is a restoration of relationship with Jesus:
  - and that comes through **repentance**
- Peter notes **three consequences of repentance** (v.19/20):
  - 1. **sins wiped out** - salvation
  - 2. **times of refreshing may come from the Lord** - life in all its fullness
  - 3. **return of the Lord** - waiting period, allowed for in God's providences so that we may repent and return to him; points to fulfilment and finality that he will bring when he returns!

- All these go together to make for rounded healing to meet our most fundamental need!

## Conclusion

- So:
  - respond to people's felt needs - listen, learn
  - proffer help to their deeper needs
  - never neglect to offer the opportunity to have their whole need met in repentance and faith in Jesus!
- If you've never responded to that offer of real healing, of a personal faith in Jesus, don't put it off!