

To all those who follow the one who came to serve and to be served, namely Jesus Christ himself,

SCRIPTURE:

Matthew 25:40 (MSG) – Larger reading: Matthew 25:31-46

Then the King will say, 'I'm telling the solemn truth: Whenever you did one of these things to someone overlooked or ignored, that was me - you did it to me.'

STORY:

Peter Hay tells the following story: In the 1950s, marketing whiz Stanley Arnold was working at Young & Rubicam, where he was asked to come up with a marketing campaign for Remington Rand. The company was among the most conservative in America. Its chairman at the time was retired General Douglas MacArthur. Intimidated at first by a company that was so much a part of America, Arnold also found in that phrase the first inspiration for a campaign. After thinking about it, he went to the New York offices of Merrill Lynch, Pierce, Fenner and Beane, and placed the ultimate odd-lot order:

"I want to purchase," he told the broker, "one share of every single stock listed on the New York Stock Exchange." After a vice president tried to talk him out of it, the order was finally placed. It came to more than \$42,000 for one share in each of the 1098 companies listed on the Big Board at the time. Arnold now took his diversified portfolio into a meeting of Remington Rand's board of directors, where he argued passionately for a sweepstakes campaign with the top prize called "A Share in America". The conservative old gentlemen shifted around in their seats and discussed the idea for a while. "But Mr. Arnold," said one, "we are not in the securities business." Said another, "We are in the shaver business."

"I agree that you are not in the securities business," said Arnold, "but I think you also ought to realize that you are not in the shaver business either. You are in the people business." The company bought the idea.

OBSERVATION:

It is often lost within the rank and file of the average church ... we are in the people business. We get caught up with the liturgy, the music, the programs, the policy-making matters, the staff, the money ... and the people get pushed aside. This is absolutely the reality of the church today which is in the middle of this pandemic. Just how can we focus in on people and their needs while honoring the safety requirements of physical distancing, wearing masks, and all the other criteria that comes with Covid-19? This does require us to think and act differently, but let me continue and see where this takes us...

Not only are we in the people business, but we are in the disenfranchised of society people business. Oh, they come with various "handles" hung around them – the poor, the needy, the hungry, the beggars, the dirty, the lazy, welfare cheats or some other title thrown out to put them down, to pass judgment, to belittle. They are the disenfranchised. Easy to ignore. Easy to overlook. Easy to pass-by on the other side.

And now we add to this list, those who refuse to wear a mask because they are caught up in “it’s a hoax” conspiracy theorists or those at the other end of the spectrum, who have so isolated themselves that they’ve wrapped themselves in the cocoon of fear.

It is also easy to throw-out the overused and misunderstood phrase ... “let them get a job”. Oh, if it was that easy. After years of working with “these people” there was a discovery made ... the majority are not mentally capable of making good decisions for their life. This probably would like to be argued by many, but reality is the reality.

The church is in the people business ... the disenfranchised people business ... giving a hand up in this world. Caring for those who cannot care for themselves. Doing unto the least of society. We are in the people business.

QUOTE:

“The most beautiful people we have known are those who have known defeat, known suffering, known struggle, known loss, and have found their way out of the depths. These persons have an appreciation, a sensitivity, and an understanding of life that fills them with compassion, gentleness, and a deep loving concern. Beautiful people do not just happen.” – Elisabeth Kübler-Ross

PRAYER:

We are surrounded by all sorts of people. Please keep us from ignoring them or from passing a judgment on them. Make us sensitive and cause us to take the time to get to know them on a personal basis. Help us to care.

And the faith journey continues, Pastor Jim
Jmartin450@tampabay.rr.com
386-795-5323

Join our Worship Service this Sunday on Facebook (Manatee United Methodist Church).

-
-
-
-

