

Sermon: "But I need It"

Scripture: Matthew 6:31-33

(The Message) 30-33 "If God gives such attention to the appearance of wildflowers—most of which are never even seen—don't you think he'll attend to you, take pride in you, do his best for you? What I'm trying to do here is to get you to relax, to not be so preoccupied with getting, so you can respond to God's giving. People who don't know God and the way he works fuss over these things, but you know both God and how he works. Steep your life in God-reality, God-initiative, God-provisions. Don't worry about missing out. You'll find all your everyday human concerns will be met.

How many times have you heard someone say, "But I need it!"? Usually it is a child desiring a toy or candy or something of that nature. Perhaps a bride wanting something more outrageous to make her day extra-special, or perhaps a sibling pleading for whatever their brother or sister has. Of course that type of "need" is usually just some sort of want.

Today I would like to address the longing need to have Love, Joy, Peace, Acceptance and Belonging.

Last Friday evening during the Mission Weekend kick-off event, I went to check on the children being tended to in the nursery and one young preschooler looked at me as I was leaving and said, "Hey, I think I need my mom." Now mind you he had been in the nursery for over an hour and was ready, I am sure, for his mom or dad to come and retrieve him. As I turned to speak with him to let him know that I heard him and that I would tell his mom that he needed her, my heart was warmed. I know he was being well cared for but he had a longing for someone whom he truly loved and knows truly loves him back..."I need my mom."

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This being the weekend of Mother's Day and the Festival of the Christian Home, as well as one weekend after our Missions celebration, I felt led to speak about the importance of being part of God's whole family and how we are needed in His kingdom.

Last weekend we heard from 3 different speakers who all agreed that through our Faith Promise pledge giving, which helps satisfy their financial need, they are able to provide specialized services for others in need. They are able to provide some of the very basic needs that every human being desires. Food, Clothing, Shelter and certainly Love. These are real needs being satisfied by God's leading. Listen to this passage from the book of Acts chapter 10 verses 1-8 "Cornelius Calls for Peter". Listen for how God used a faithful follower to further His kingdom.

¹At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion in what was known as the Italian Regiment. ²He and all his family were devout and God-fearing; he gave generously to those in need and prayed to God regularly. ³One day at about three in the afternoon he had a vision. He distinctly saw an angel of God, who came to him and said, "Cornelius!" ⁴Cornelius stared at him in fear. "What is it, Lord?" he asked. The angel answered, "Your prayers and gifts to the poor have come up as a memorial offering before God. ⁵Now send men to Joppa to bring back a man named Simon who is called Peter. ⁶He is staying with Simon the tanner, whose house is by the sea." ⁷When the angel who spoke to him had gone, Cornelius called two of his servants and a devout soldier who was one of his attendants. ⁸He told them everything that had happened and sent them to Joppa.

Cornelius heard God's call on His life and God used Cornelius to help Peter prepare for his ministry.

The past two years during January and leading to our Faith Promise Weekend in the Spring, the Christian Education Department adopts their own "Mission Project". In 2008

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we raised money for a program called "The Free Wheelchair Mission" which supplies specially made wheelchairs to disabled people in developing countries. Through the generosity of our Sunday School children and this congregation, we raised over \$2,300.00, which provided 46 Wheelchairs for people with great need, (the desire to be ambulatory and to be accepted.)

This season we adopted the "Clean Water Project" which builds wells in developing countries for villages and schools to have clean water. Again through your generosity and the hard work of our Sunday School children we were able to raise over \$4,000.00, enough for 1 complete well and a generous portion of another. Clean water for people in need, (the desire for better health and longer living.)

The amazing joy that comes from helping others in need is hard to describe yet that is exactly what God desires for us. He needs us, we need Him and that void of "wanting unnecessary things" seems to fade.

I asked one of our younger Sunday School students, "Why do you think it is important to help others who don't have what you have?" His answer was, "Because it makes me feel good." "Really" I said, "So why don't we do it all the time?" He replied..."cause sometimes I need people to help me too and I can't do everything for everybody." I said, "Well, I agree with that, sometimes we are the givers to help people in need and sometimes we are the need." Don't you agree, this sounds like the way a family is

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suppose to be.

Then I asked another young person to tell me what, at this point in their life, they needed. Of course the first few answers were items, "bigger TV, newer phone, a car and some new clothes". I said ..."no, tell me what you need, not what you want." It took her a few minutes but she eventually said, "...family, friends, a safe place to live and God." "Why God?" Her answer was truly from her heart..."cause I love Him and I know that He loves me. So I need Him." My follow-up question to that response was..."How do you know that He loves you?" With very little effort, she was able to list a lot of ways God shows His love to her. A beautiful world, people who love her and care for her and then she said..."Because He sent Jesus, and now I have a friend forever."

By the end of our conversation I was filled with hope. She was able share the difference in what it was she needed verses what it was she wanted. She needed God the Father and to be part of His family.

I wonder if we could all do that. Could we explain the need of having God as our Father, Jesus as our Savior then to have an understanding of the Holy Spirit as our guide? Is that what makes us truly part of God's family?

In the scripture I read earlier from The Message, Matthew says..."Don't worry about missing out. You'll find all your everyday human concerns will be met." The NLT puts it

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this way..."So don't worry about these things saying, What will I eat? What will I drink? What will I wear? These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers, but your heavenly Father already knows all your needs. Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously and he will give you everything you need." Not everything you WANT but everything you Need and He will use His power and His people to provide it.

Again remember to what I said earlier. Through the faithfulness of God's people (our visiting missionaries and so many others) the earthly needs of food, clothing and shelter are being provided to people who seemingly have very little. The connection they (the Missionaries) have with God gives them what they need so they can then go and give to others in need. "God will supply all my needs according to His riches in Glory!" Our job then is to pass onto others that connection to God and show them that they too are needed in God's family and that He will use them to help others.

Throughout the Scriptures God proves His intention to care for us and to provide for us. Remember when the Israelites were in the dessert and they were hungry? God provided the Manna (Ex. 16), or when Abraham was preparing to sacrifice Isaac, God provided a ram (Gen. 22), or when Paul and Silas were in jail and God caused an earthquake to release their chains? (Acts 16)

All acts to prove God's power and His love for HIS people and for us to recognize how God's design is for us to live with Him, abide in Him and love through Him. He wants all

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of us to be part of His family. Remember Jesus, God's son...when we accept him as our savior we are welcomed into the family of God. We do not have to be perfect to get there we just have to be willing to allow God to change us and to fill a void as only He can!

Hear these words from 1 Timothy 1.

¹²I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength, that he considered me faithful, appointing me to his service. ¹³Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief. ¹⁴The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. ¹⁵Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst. ¹⁶But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on him and receive eternal life.

Not only did Paul repent and accept God's love, grace and mercy through Jesus but he then had the need to share it with everyone! Even us.

We need God. We need a relationship with Jesus and we need family, community and togetherness. We need to be needed and we need love, forgiveness and grace. Yes, we need food and drink to sustain our bodies, we need shelter from the elements, and at times we need a good talking to. (That's where the earthly parent comes in!) We need laws and rules and guidance. God supplies them through others but nothing can take the place of or fulfill our real need. We need love and according to 1 John 4:8, God is love!

We need God and we need each other.

Ephesians 1:4-6

⁴For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love ⁵he^[L] predestined us to be adopted as his children through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— ⁶to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.

We need to trust that God's promises are true and we need to look everyday for what God

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wants to impart to us.

I will end with one of my favorite stories in the Bible. In the book of Acts, chapter 8, there is a story about an Ethiopian Eunuch and Phillip. Listen to the story from the NLT.

26 As for Philip, an angel of the Lord said to him, "Go south^[b] down the desert road that runs from Jerusalem to Gaza." 27 So he started out, and he met the treasurer of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under the Kandake, the queen of Ethiopia. The eunuch had gone to Jerusalem to worship, 28 and he was now returning. Seated in his carriage, he was reading aloud from the book of the prophet Isaiah. 29 The Holy Spirit said to Philip, "Go over and walk along beside the carriage." 30 Philip ran over and heard the man reading from the prophet Isaiah. Philip asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" 31 The man replied, "How can I, unless someone instructs me?" And he urged Philip to come up into the carriage and sit with him. 32 The passage of Scripture he had been reading was this: "He was led like a sheep to the slaughter. And as a lamb is silent before the shearers, he did not open his mouth. 33 He was humiliated and received no justice. Who can speak of his descendants? For his life was taken from the earth."^[c] 34 The eunuch asked Philip, "Tell me, was the prophet talking about himself or someone else?" 35 So beginning with this same Scripture, Philip told him the Good News about Jesus. 36 As they rode along, they came to some water, and the eunuch said, "Look! There's some water! Why can't I be baptized?"^[d] 38 He ordered the carriage to stop, and they went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. 39 When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away. The eunuch never saw him again but went on his way rejoicing. 40 Meanwhile, Philip found himself farther north at the town of Azotus. He preached the Good News there and in every town along the way until he came to Caesarea.

God will supply ALL our needs...Proof is in this story!

The Eunuch, obviously a man of faith, after all he was coming from Worshipping in the Temple and he was reading from the prophet Isaiah. He was confused though. Was it happening then? Did it happen already? Will it happen?

Then God through the Holy Spirit sends Phillip to help him and to tell him the Good

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News of Jesus and there, of course just happened to be some water so he could be baptized. "The Message" says..."a stream of water". Certainly enough for a baptism! The Eunuch was baptized and filled with the Holy Spirit. God supplied his greatest need...to know Jesus! I think the Eunuch was really happy too after all, he went off rejoicing! And I would even go out on a limb and guess that the Eunuch suddenly realized he was part of God's family!

God needs you. His kingdom needs you. The poor need you; the lonely need you; the church needs you...the cause of God needs you. You are part of the purposes he is working out in all the world (Eph.1:11). The kingdom needs you to discover and deploy your unique skill and to be part of the family!

God wants to be your Father. He wants Jesus to be your brother, your example. God truly wants to satisfy all your needs.

Take time this week to look at what you have, to look at what you want and to understand what it is you need. Then allow God through the Holy Spirit to shine through you and accept his gift of unconditional love.

He needs you to make His family complete. Celebrate His Christian Home and seek understanding in that... a relationship with God the Father and Creator is really all you need. His promises are true, He will supply...you can trust that! AMEN.