

"Live as examples of Christ Jesus"

Devotions for Deacons

Title: Minister to Rich and Poor Alike

Scripture: Mark 10:17-22

Text: Galatians 6:9-10a

“So, deacons,
“do good to
all people”
(Gal. 6:10a).
Minister to
everyone as
Jesus did.”

Crowds follow Jesus wherever He goes. They want something from Him. Most of the time, they are desperate for a miracle. The rich young man (or “ruler,” as other Gospels call him) is no exception. Despite the dignity of his position, this man, in his desperation, runs after Jesus. Despite who he is, this man falls on his knees before Jesus. But he is looking for a different kind of miracle. He is not ill, not in any way that he can see. He needs to learn from Jesus. He desperately wants to know how to have eternal life.

The rich young man misses the mark immediately. If Jesus is no more than a “good teacher” to him, Jesus’ words will not produce the miracle for which the young man is looking. Jesus gently prompts him: “No one is good –except God alone.” But the man does not figure it out. He does not recognize Jesus for who He is. If Jesus is simply a teacher, the man believes that Jesus can teach him the thing he must *do* to be saved. Jesus shows him how impossible that is by asking him to give away everything he owns. If the rich young man would only believe Jesus is God, however, his focus would immediately change. He would have faith; his heart would be engaged. He would be on his knees in gratitude, and would respond by giving back to God in thanksgiving.

Jesus would not have needed to tell him to give to the poor.

This man is not a disciple. He is not on the margins of society. He is not poor. He does not seem to have an obvious need. And yet his need is greater in many ways. It is easy to judge his spiritual blindness. How could he miss the truth when it is right in front of him? But of course you notice Jesus’ response. Jesus looks at him and loves him. He simply loves him. How beautiful. How hopeful. And what a lesson for us.

Benevolence is kindness. As deacons, we normally associate that word with the offering. And the money in the benevolent fund often goes to the poor. But Jesus, in this story, enlarges our definition of benevolence. This story is not as much about giving to the poor. This story is about the heart. Jesus loves the rich young man and He wants him to love God back.

So, deacons, “do good to all people” (Gal. 6:10a). Minister to everyone as Jesus did. Do not judge. Do not discriminate. Minister to those in the church. Minister to your neighbours. To the poor and to the rich. Show kindness. Meet their needs.

And love them.