

## **Active and Healthy**

### **Matthew 11:1-6 ...**

While the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus is certainly the climax of His redemptive work, the sum of His earthly work also helps to define the mission of the Church. While the Church cannot repeat the death of Christ since His atoning death was “a unique and unrepeatable work for human salvation;” nevertheless, the Church continues the same work by existing to seek and save the lost. Further, it is also in the earthly work of Christ that we find the mission of the Church. Peter notes in Acts 10:36-38 that Jesus was “preaching peace” and “doing good and healing” – these activities form the backbone of the present work of the Church. As Ferguson notes:

“Jesus’ ministry was threefold: teaching, preaching, and healing. This statement corresponds to the classification of his work as edification, evangelism, and benevolence (in a broad sense) ... in the description of the work of the church.”

Surely foremost among the works of the Church must be evangelism, as preaching the Gospel was characteristic of Jesus’ work – Matt. 4:17; Mark 1:15; Luke 5:32: etc. Some of the final words of Jesus, as recorded in the Synoptic Gospels, points those listening to the continued work of spreading the good news (Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:15, 16; and Luke 24:47). This work of evangelism can also be clearly seen in the work of the 1<sup>st</sup> century church. Acts 8:4 notes that when the disciples were scattered because of persecution they went from place to place “preaching the word.” Of such importance is the proclamation of the Gospel of Christ, congregations of the time assisted those that were involved in evangelistic efforts with prayer, funds, and hospitality. Even in their own communities, Christians were to “shine as lights in the world” (Phil. 2:15).

Edification is a natural outgrowth of evangelism since those converted by the proclamation of the Gospel must be instructed how to live and work as members of the Church. Jesus is often portrayed as a teacher to those gathered, a primary example would be the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-7), but Jesus also took the time to teach the apostles apart from the masses (Matt. 13:10, 11). Jesus commanded that this teaching should continue (Matt. 28:20), and the early church took form to carry out that command. From Ephesians 4:11-16, edification is not exclusively a responsibility of those that are seen as the leadership of the Church, but the instructions to edify, to build up, also extends to everyone as “every part does its share.”

Deeds of mercy are frequently recorded in the life and ministry of Jesus; in fact, those deeds are part of how Jesus identified Himself to John’s disciples (Matt. 11:4, 5). In Matthew 25:31-46 the sheep are divided from the goats based on the merciful works done for those in need. From the pen of Paul (Rom. 12:13) to James (1:27), the New Testament teaches abundantly on the need of the Christian to be benevolent. John teaches us that love requires expression in practical assistance (1 John 3:16-18). Christians may lack the miraculous powers demonstrated by Jesus and the Apostles, but that should never stop us from doing the work exemplified in the Word.

We, as the Church, are the craftsmanship of God, created in Christ Jesus to do good works (Eph. 2:10). The Church continues, in principle, the same type of work that Jesus began during His time on earth: preaching the gospel, promoting spiritual growth and health, and mercifully attending to those in need. When the body of Christ no longer does the work of Christ, it becomes a corpse.

## What Do You See?

John 9:2 – “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born \_\_\_\_\_?”

John 9:5 – “I am the \_\_\_\_\_ of the world.”

John 9:16 – “How can a man who is a \_\_\_\_\_ so such signs?”

John 9:30 – “Why, this is a marvelous thing, that you do not know where He is from; yet He has opened my \_\_\_\_\_!”

\*\* What did Jesus say to the man born \_\_\_\_\_?

In v.35 when Jesus says, “Do you believe?” He’s asking do you believe in the \_\_\_\_\_.

A plain acknowledgement by Jesus that He is the \_\_\_\_\_.

\*\* What did Jesus say to all those \_\_\_\_\_?

John 9:39 – “... that those who do not \_\_\_\_\_ may \_\_\_\_\_, and that those who \_\_\_\_\_ may be made \_\_\_\_\_.”

This oxymoron describes two sets of \_\_\_\_\_.

\*\* What did Jesus say to the \_\_\_\_\_?

Pharisees standing by become \_\_\_\_\_.

John 9:41 – “If you were \_\_\_\_\_, you would have no sin; but now you say, ‘We see.’ Therefore your sin \_\_\_\_\_.”

\*\* Question: Would the blind man have been healed if he had believed \_\_\_\_\_ acted?