

Scripture: Luke 14:1-6.

Topic: The Time to Help.

Text: Luke 14:5b ----".....immediately pull him out....."

Proposition: The time to help people is when they both need and want your help. This is so in almost every area of life, but especially in the field of religious teaching and evangelism.

Dates written: September 20-22, 1961.

Dates and places preached:

Sept 24, 1961, Montrose, Colo.
June 5, 66 - Delmarva + Beaufort, N.C.
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May 15

Introduction: This is the

Chapter: The time to help

Text: "The time to help is now" ...
only will it out ...

Association: The time to help
people is when they least need it.
Write your help. This is so in almost
every area of life, but especially
in the field of religious teaching
and evangelism.

Notes written: September 29-30, 1961.

Notes and places overlaid:

Notes written in pencil:
The time to help is now
Write your help
This is so in almost every area of life

Introduction:

1. A church-produced motion picture is entitled "The World Behind the Headlines." The story features a man who has recently been given a medical discharge after 25 years in the Navy. Like many retired people, and others who have suddenly found themselves without regular employment or unable to work, this man had lots of time to think.

2. He found that every time he saw a headline dealing with one of the major problems of the world he would see in his mind's eye, or would recall, happenings which demonstrated these events, which he had seen himself.

a. He saw a headline stating that testing of nuclear weapons was to take place; and he recalled vividly the sudden flash, the heat wave, the winds, the mushroom-shaped cloud, which he had witnessed at atomic bomb tests in the Pacific; or he would think of the destruction that he had seen in Japan which such bombs caused.

b. ~~The~~ He would see a headline

Introduction:

1. The church-organized system
 is known as "The World's
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3. He saw a building which
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 his own.

4. The man would see a building

~~Helling of communist~~-inspired riots somewhere, and to his mind would flood memories of the brutal sights and sounds of such events which he had witnessed.

c. He would read in the paper of violence by gangs of juvenile delinquents, and he would remember such events which he had seen.

d. A headline would mention problems caused by drinking, and his own wife's death as a jawalker while drinking heavily would haunt him.

Whatever the headline, it seemed that he could see the event behind it.

3. He felt that he just had to escape from the world of headlines and memories, of events over which he felt powerless. In desperation he banged on the locked front door of a church. No one heard. When he went to the rear door of the church and rang the bell and pounded the door, the pastor came.

4. The minister asked him in and invited him to tell his story, which he did. When the pastor asked the

veteran why he came to the church and what he expected of the church, the vet was not sure. He said he guessed he wanted a refuge, where these problems would leave him alone, where he could find peace and quiet.

5. The minister pointed out to him that the church should provide peace, and strength to help people face up to life's problems, not to escape them. He told how the church tries to help people all over the world by feeding the hungry, teaching the illiterate, healing the sick, clothing the naked, training people in vocational skills so that they might improve their lot themselves, and by compassion, example and teaching to win them to christian ways of thinking and acting.

6. The minister said that the church is not a place where one should escape from the headlines. Rather, it is a place for becoming motivated to help solve problems revealed by the headlines.

~~ixx~~ The minister went on to show that

I. To have compassion for and to want to help those in need is christian.

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I. To have compassion for others
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The church is a center of strategy ; in which many christian individuals plan together how to help others.

1. The minister's concept of the church as an agency for helping people is one which may not have convinced the motion picture's navy veteran but which is a true one. The church is a helping agency manned by christians to do what they do because they love God.

2. We pretty generally accept this idea that in the face of human need the christian reaction is to want to help.

3. As we read the New Testament we can not escape the fact that most of Christ's 3-year ministry was given to helping people. He healed the sick, comforted the mourning, instructed the curious, helped the poor, and inspired the rich.

4. The New Testament shows the disciples and the early church as having compassion on the needy. At first the church itself was small, its people persecuted and poor. Because of this its first organized

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its work persecuted and poor. The
essence of this is that organized

efforts at helping others who needed food and clothing were aimed at its own less-fortunate numbers. We find records of Paul ~~at~~ many places taking offerings which were sent to the impoverished church at Jerusalem. Late as the church grew larger and became more socially-acceptable and its members became well-to-do, it reached out with its resources to help all the needy people it could, whether they were christian or not. Early in its history the church had places in which to ~~care~~ care for the sick, the orphaned, and the aged. Further, it has encouraged its members as individuals to help the needy as best they can.

5. We still accept the concept that it is christian to have compassion on and to try to help those in need. We act on our compassion by helping through many church-related missions and agencies. We help through secular, non-church groups, such as UNICEF, the various health funds, and Red Cross. Occasionally most of us will help ~~xx~~ a transient, or a sick neighbor, or a person injured in an accident, helping just on an individual humane basis. It is often the natural thing to help those in

need. Certainly it is the christian thing to do.

6. Sometimes church members are amazed that their help, perhaps in the form of schools, hospitals and agricultural missions in a foreign country, isn't appreciated. For that matter, on a personal basis you or I have perhaps been puzzled and hurt at times when we did something nice for somebody, only to have it seem unwanted, unappreciated, and perhaps resented. Then it is that we can discover that

II. To help people against their wishes often is to do harm, no matter how greatly they need the help.

1. In our Scripture today we read of an incident in Jesus' life in which he helped a man by healing him of the dropsy. There is no record of whether or not the man expressed gratitude to Jesus, but we may be sure that he was glad to be healed. Perhaps he didn't have much chance to say anything, because he was the immediate cause and center of a controversy between Jesus and the Scribes and Pharisees.

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sure that he wanted to be helpful.
Foreigners are fighting for such a chance to
and everything, because he was in-
vite cause and center of a coun-
versary between laws and the forces
of the process.

2. These people were critical of the lack of concern which Jesus seemed to have for some of their traditional religious and social customs. Among the religious customs which they thought Jesus neglected or defied were the ones relating to observance of the Sabbath day. According to Jewish law and custom, no work could be done on the Sabbath. Activities which were to be considered work, and therefore were forbidden, were spelled out in great detail. Almost anything that could wait until the next day was forbidden to be done on the Sabbath. Food which was eaten on the Sabbath had to be prepared in the preceding week.

3. On the particular case recorded in our Scripture, the man with ~~the~~ dropsy could have been healed the next day, if Jesus were to be there then. Since he probably had had the disease for a long time anyway, what was the hurry? Jesus pointed out to the Pharisees that on the Sabbath they would immediately pull out of a well an animal which had fallen into it. He implied thereby that it was much more important to relieve a man of long-borne suffering on the Sabbath than to save the life of an animal.

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than to give the life of an animal.

In some other parts of the New Testament we find Jesus saying that man and his needs is much more important than an animal, or than any other economic asset. This is certainly the implication in our Scripture here. It reminds us a bit of the law in some western states whereby you may be imprisoned only a year or so, or only fined heavily, if you injure a person severely; but if you steal a cow you will get 20 years or more in prison. Values get mixed up sometimes.

4. No matter how right Jesus was on this, until he could convince the Pharisees and other critics that he was right his helpful action served to antagonize them. Indeed, such activities and teachings by Jesus aroused so much antagonism that his critics eventually were responsible for having him executed as a blasphemer and traitor. Even in the face of such dangerous opposition, Jesus continued to do that which he knew to be right, so long as it helped someone.

5. On occasion, however, when his teachings were unappreciated and he could help no one at a place, he would leave a community. He once told

his disciples that if they did their best to teach and help folks in a community but were rejected, to shake off the dust of the town from their feet and leave it. Jesus recognized that when no one wants the very real help which you offer it is almost useless to continue to try to give it to them. Sometimes to continue trying to give unwanted help does harm.

6. An illustration of the harm which well-intentioned helpfulness can do is interestingly related in James Mischener's novel "Hawaii." The young missionary couples from the Congregational Church who first sailed from New England to evangelize the Polynesians who peopled the islands were highly motivated to bring Christ to people who needed him. They did some good, without doubt. They also were responsible for much harm.

The easy-going friendly, fun-loving natives were cordial to the missionaries, gave them a hearing, and many accepted the new religion. At the same time, the Polynesians, whose natural immunity to white men's diseases was low, contracted small pox, measles and other diseases, and died from these by the thousands. The not-so-religious sailors from the

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white men's ships gratefully and lustfully accepted the complete companionship of the native women, whose standards on the matter of co-habitation were much different from those of the missionaries. Soon "sailor's pox," or syphilis, was widespread. As the children of the missionaries grew up most of them were more responsive to the materialistic opportunities of the islands than to chances to help the natives. The children and further-removed descendants of the missionaries wound up owning most of the islands. As in so many mission areas, in its total effect the help was more harmful than helpful, if we interpret correctly Mischener's factually-based story.

7. Perhaps it is because the needy peoples of many African, Asian, and South American countries feel that we insist on helping them whether they want it or not that much of our foreign aid seems to be unappreciated and wasted.

8. On a personal basis, there is an old adage that advice, no matter how good, is not appreciated unless it is asked for.

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...as the...
...children of the missionaries...
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6. On a general...
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9. Some of the deepest resentments I have ever heard have been expressed by people who were objects of charity when they felt they were capable of taking care of themselves.

10. It seems to be apparent that

III. When help is wanted and requested by those in need it is most apt to be effective and appreciated.

1. Since we have arrived at this statement by illustrating its opposite, by saying that unasked for and unwanted help is often very harmful, we do not need to spend very much time illustrating this statement. We have already demonstrated it negatively, or in reverse. We might, however, consider just one positive instance which points up our fact.

2. Most of us are familiar with the fact that in Anchorage, Alaska, a new Methodist college, or university, is now operating, known as Alaska Methodist University, or AMU. A church-related college has a certain number of required courses in religion among its requirements for graduation. Sometimes it is difficult to get

A U.S. Army company had gathered to listen to their new commanding officer. "I want you to respect me as your leader," he said, "but if you've got any problems, feel free to talk with me as if I were your father."

A voice boomed from the rear, "Hey, pop, can I use the jeep tonight?"
(from Quote, 1-10-71)

popular support, from other than Methodists, for one of our institutions because, very naturally, many people don't want to help propagate religious teachings other than their own. The people of Anchorage, however, were happy to welcome a Methodist University. They wanted it, and to prove their want they donated and pledged over 1 million dollars (if my memory is correct) of the 5 million needed to get the institution started. AMU is operating now, and soon Alaska-trained college graduates will emerge from it to stay in Alaska to provide native trained leadership.

3. We could list ^{SERIOUS} ~~many more~~ illustrations from personal lives, institutions, and events to show that help is more apt to be ^{APPRECIATED AND} useful when its receiver wants it and asks for it. We now carry this thought to specific areas of church interest, and say that

IV. In Christian teaching and evangelism a basic principle is to win by example and persuasion only, never by coercion.

1. We do not think of coercion here as being the type of authority which the parent of a growing child

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IV. In... and...
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uses to make him do the things which are necessary for physical, mental, emotional and religious maturing. A parent **must** see that a child eats a balanced diet, has preventive medical treatment, and is taught good bodily habits. Even if the child **rebels** every step of the way, a parent should try to see that these things are done. The parent should try to transmit to the child an understanding of and appreciation for the knowledge and customs of his times. A child must be taught, often against his will, that certain social standards are **mandatory** upon him if he is to live in society. A loving parent wants his child to have the most possible happiness and satisfaction in life. Knowing that happiness and satisfaction come best from christian living, a parent should see that **his** child is well-indoctrinated in christian principles. Again, we would say this religious teaching should be mandatory for the child, for a child is not capable on the basis of momentary childish whims to judge the lasting effect upon him of early religious education. We could quote no less a secular authority than J. Edgar Hoover to back up this argument for mandatory religious training for children and youth on the part of

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for religious education training for
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parents. In childhood and youth guidance is needed to develop judgment which in adult life will prove to be sound.

2. For adults, however, the story is different. When we say "adults" we are thinking of people in any part of the world, of any skin color, of any race. A person who has achieved adult status in his own society considers himself capable of making his own decisions. He is responsible for his actions, and wants to decide what they shall be, whether he makes right or wrong decisions. This is the basis for much of the unrest of the world today. Africans don't want their destiny and rights determined for them by Europeans. Colored peoples want all the rights and privileges which they see lighter-skinned peoples enjoying. They reason that other people are just people like themselves, and therefore are not superior in capabilities to themselves. If these other people are to help them, they want it to be help which they want and ask for. We see this tendency in ourselves, in that some of us don't want Federal aid for schools or for other projects, because we fear Federal specifications in these areas which we might not

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3. In mission work we have for some time now tried to win people to Christ by Christian example of kindness and persuasion, and not by coercion. This is, and should be, our emphasis in our church's outreach to others right here at home, too. As we do good for others, **when** they want and are willing to accept it, with no personal or church advantage as our motive, their response is more apt to be in favor of a faith like ours.

4. Sometimes a person will complain to a minister that he offered his help to the church in a certain area, **but** nobody ever took him up on **it**. Sometimes a minister who investigates such a claim will find that this is true, but that the reason nobody ever took him up on it is because the job is already being done well by somebody else, or by someone who needs to be allowed to do the job. Sometimes the person who complains he isn't wanted turns down request after request to do other jobs for which he is well-fitted. Even in church work, your help is most appreciated **when** it is given when and where it is most

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times the person who complains has just wanted some form of request after request to do other jobs for which he is well-fitted. Even in church work your help is most appreciated when it is given when and where it is most

wanted.

Conclusion:

1. Jesus spoke of the Pharisees as being among those who when an animal fell into a well would "immediately pull him out."

2. He demonstrated his concern to give to needy humans the help they asked for, by immediately healing the ill who were brought to his attention.

3. As christians attempting to follow in the footsteps of Jesus, we, too, should strive to give immediate help to others when it is needed, if they are willing to accept it. This is true both in serving people person-to-person, and through church and other institutions.

4. The time to help people is when they both need and want your help. This is so in every area of life, but especially in the field of religious teaching and evangelism. Your help, your influence, your abilities are needed by Christ, by his Church, for others. Won't you give it, as needed?

Conclusion:

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Closing Prayer for Sermon

"A Time to Help"

Dear Lord and Father, we thank thee again for Jesus, who helped the needy according to not only their need but in consideration of their want. Help us to be quick to sense need and want and to respond to it with such help as is at our command. Help each of us to know that in some way he is needed by thee, and give ^{him} us the will to respond to this need.

In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

Christie
"Time to go"

Dear Lord and Father, we thank
thee for years, who helped them
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In Jesus name we pray. Amen.