

Coffee Connect | Who is My Neighbor?

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

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SPEAKERS

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Katie Langston 00:17

You're listening to an Extra Shot episode on the Project Zion Podcast, a shorter episode that lets you get your project Zion fix in between our full-length episodes. It might be shorter timewise but hopefully not in content. So regardless of the temperature at which you prefer your caffeine, sit back and enjoy this Extra Shot.

Linda Booth 00:59

Hello, Coffee Connect listeners. My name is Linda Booth and I host this series of story. Sharing gospel and modern day stories continues. I believe the work of Christ to gather people to Himself, and by His death and resurrection set them free for new life in the world. It is this community of disciples formed in Christ's image that finds its place and role in the Gospel story and continues to bear witness of Jesus Christ in and for the world. This outward action becomes a public announcement of God's actions in the world, and moves people from the safe group they call family, to God's children who need gospel transformation, gospel and real life stories help communities remember, it helps them recite and live their lives into the narrative of God's action, and Jesus Christ. When inhabited faithfully, story keeps us from being mere tourists on a journey, instead we become pilgrims, who seek to live into the story. Only as this happens, can we become faithful tellers, and actors of that story in a world that is watching and listening, even when we are tempted to think it is not. Jesus understood the power of story to spiritually form and prepare people to be sent in Christ's mission. He was a master storyteller and he used parables to place his followers in the story and elicit a response or change in their behavior. One example among many is the story of the compassionate Samaritan, or better known as the Good Samaritan. This story ends not with they lived happily ever after. But with the question, which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers? So who is my neighbor?

Linda Booth 03:13

Well, this is the response of Barbara and Glenn to that question. During the 2009 Gulf Mission Center reunion, or family camp, Barbara told the following story. She and her husband Glenn are retired professionals who live their discipleship in the context of their lives. One evening, they drove from their home in Pascagoula, Mississippi to meet friends at an expensive restaurant in New Orleans, Louisiana. Along a busy highway, they saw an old bleeding man struggling to get on his bicycle. And Barber said, Glenn, turn around and go back we must help him and help him and glim reason that because there

was so many cars passing by the old man, that surely someone would stop and help. But when he had an opportunity, he turned around and headed back to the old man who was still struggling. Glenn and Barbara got out of the car. They tended to his wounds, and they told him that they would take him to his home. As they were loading the band's bicycle into their Escalade SUV. Two policemen arrived, putting on rubber gloves to deal with the man's injuries. And Barbara said she looked at her hands which were covered with the man's blood. They followed the police car to the man's home, where they spent time with him to ensure he would be alright. They missed their dinner with their friends. Barbara and Glenn could have made a different choice that night. Many drivers some of whom probably were Christians, drove past the bleeding man. However, Barbara and Glenn were the only ones who stopped to help him. On that day, they heard the call that summon them to take part in God's grand story. They traveled as good Samaritans and gave flesh to Jesus Christ. The biblical narrative continued through their actions. So, who is my neighbor? This is a story about a man named Bill and a man named Bill. At the first Racine, Missouri reunion commitment service. Many people stood to rededicate their lives as Jesus's disciples. I vividly remember one of them. A retired man named Bill simply said, I commit to being a good neighbor to my neighbor, Bill. And then he sat down. Several months later, I had the opportunity to sit next to Bill at a potluck in his home congregation. And I asked him about his neighbor, Bill. And he told me Well, that's quite a story. I knew Bill before he went to jail. For years, he and his wife next lived next door to me. And one night when they got in a fight, they both took out their guns and shot at each other. Well, she missed him, but his aim was better and he wounded her. She went to the hospital. He went to jail. He's released now and he's moved back to his home, and I'm trying to help him. And he continued with the story. He said, he doesn't have a car yet. So I take him to the grocery store and to run other errands. And since he's been in prison, he's developed some really bad behaviors. And last time, I took him to pick up a benefit check, he said something inappropriate to the woman clerk. Now the office has banned him. Next week, I will need to go in and pick up his check. I said to Bill, you know, your neighbor may never change, he probably will continue to get in trouble and cause you a lot of trouble. Yeah, I know, Bill replied. But you know what? He needs a good neighbor. And that's me. And something else, my neighbor Bill is a child of God. He needs to know that. So who is my neighbor? This is my last story. Several years ago at a reunion or family camp in western Pennsylvania, a man stood during the morning fellowship service to ask for prayers for a woman and her granddaughter. They were going to be baptized at the reunion. The woman was his next door neighbor. They had started out as casual friends occasionally speaking across their front yards. Now they were good friends. As a result, the woman and her granddaughter had asked to be baptized at the reunion. Another morning he asked for prayers for the woman's brother. He explained that her brother had been in a motorcycle accident, paralyzing him from the waist down. Because he couldn't care for himself when released from the hospital, he was forced to live with his sister. The man said that each day he would go next door to help the woman care for her brother. He said at first, the brother was very angry, especially at God. But as they became close friends and he shared his witness of Jesus Christ, the paralyzed man's attitude gradually changed. The man was developing a personal relationship with God. He wanted to support his sister by coming to her baptism. So prayers were asked on his behalf, so that he could come and participate in that baptismal service. On the afternoon of the baptismal service, we gathered on the bank of a lake as storm clouds moved toward us. Several people with guitars were standing on the shoreline singing "For Those Tears I Died." And the words go something like this: And Jesus said, Come to the water. Stand by my side. I know you were thirsty, you won't be denied. I felt every tear drop in the darkness you cried. And I strove to remind you that for those tears, I died. As the woman and her granddaughter and the man who was a living expression of Jesus with this

family walked into the lake, it began to rain. And I thought, God must be crying tears of joy now. They came up out of the water, and we clapped and joy because it was raining harder now, people were moving quickly to seek shelter. And as they separated, I saw a man in a wheelchair. The man who had cared for the paralyzed man and had just baptize his sister and niece leaned over to talk with him. And then that good neighbor raised his hand, and he shouted above the commotion, "Stop. We're gonna have another baptism." And then he and another man gently put their arms under the man, lifted him from the wheelchair, and carried him into the water as God's joyful tears rained all around us. So you see, my friends, we are to be good neighbors. The parable that Jesus told was not just a story, it was a call to action. And so now you and I are called to be a good friend to our neighbor. Action. Jesus's action lived out in us.

Josh Mangelson 11:01

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