

Title: MODEL FOR MINISTRY AND LIFE, MARK 6:30-34 & 53-56  
(Chatham, NJ; 07/22/12, AM) [Pc – Topical]

Theme: Christ's ministry provides the model of teaching and healing for the church.

Purpose: To define the teaching and healing functions of the church and to exhort us to consecrate ourselves to those tasks.

Introduction:

1. Remember this phrase: Out of the Saltshaker.
2. This is not only the essence of Jesus' ministry, but it will also be the theme for this year's *40 Days of Prayer*.
3. Jesus lived and worked among the people, not separated from them.
4. As individual Christians we need to put ourselves where we can be an influence, and as a community we need to organize ourselves in such a way that we spend at least equal amounts of time teaching ourselves and teaching others.
5. Our ministries now are primarily focused internally on our own needs.
6. We must find a way to be among the people as well.

#### I. Healing Ministry, Mark 6:53-56

##### A. Signposts not destinations

1. Miracles demonstrated Jesus' power and the activity of God.
2. They affirmed the message, Hebrews 2:4.
3. I don't deny that God still works miracles in people's lives today.
4. However, Jesus did not come to set up funeral home ministries nor healing clinics where everyone is raised from the dead or completely healed.
5. The miracles weren't performed with this in mind.

##### B. What a healing/charitable ministry looks like

1. The church is not a vending machine; we give but seek to create independence.
2. Reserve dependency for those who are truly and irrevocably dependent.
3. Robert Lupton's new book, *Toxic Charity: How Churches and Charities Hurt Those They Help—and How to Reverse It*, addresses the issues in giving.
4. He notes Jimmy Carter's attempt to eradicate poverty but notes the problems involved in programs that don't encourage responsible behavior.

##### C. New Testament Models

1. Show compassion but address deeper needs.
2. The Christian life demanded responsible behavior, 1 Thess. 4:10-12 & 2 Thess. 3:10-12; pay your own way.
3. Gal. 6:4 – take pride in your work; we should encourage work because it can be a source of pride to care for your family.
4. Be a producer, not a taker, Ephesians 4:28.
5. Christianity must address the root causes of poverty: "A study from the Brookings Institution has shown that for those who graduate from high school, get a full-time job, and wait until 21 before they marry and then have their first child, the probability of being poor is two percent. And if those factors are absent, the probability of being poor is 76 percent."
6. Absentee fathers are one of the most significant contributing factors in criminal behavior and levels of poverty: Christianity demands faithfulness to marriage
7. A program to support the dependent: see 1 Timothy 5:3-18
  - To be in the program a widow had to have proven herself, 9-10
  - She can't be too young, 11-15
  - Relatives are expected to bear the burden first, 3-8 & 16
  - Only after these qualifications are met can someone be eligible

- This may not be a work requirement but it is a responsibility requirement
- Paul reserves the resources of the church for those who are truly needy
- He does not expunge the work rule from the program

II. Teaching, Mark 6:30-34 (*From Prophecy to Charity* – “those on a troubled behavioral track usually stay poor”) A healing/charitable ministry must be an outgrowth of the larger mission: teaching.

A. Teaching as a primary tool

1. Christianity invites people into God’s presence, to know him and his creation.
2. Teaching helps people get out of circular thinking that promotes and reproduces bad behavior
3. The healing model must be engaged to the teaching model.
4. In Mark 6:34 Jesus’ compassion prompted him to teach them first.
5. It could be that he asked them what he asked the man at the pool in the Temple, “Do you want to get well?”
6. He had to elicit their consent.
7. Should anyone accept his teachings, we can assume a yes answer.

B. The models for the church

1. First, Paul spread the message by means of daily lectures in the hall of Tyrannus, Acts 19:9-10.
2. All Asia heard the Gospel. How did they know about these lectures?
3. Second, Jesus engages the Samaritan woman in John 4.
4. He turns a simple conversation into one that brings up spiritual need.
5. In Acts 11:20 many people began speaking to Gentiles (the emphasis in the narrative is on Gentiles, but my point is simply that they spoke to them)
6. Third, the Gospel was spread in the Temple and from house to house, Acts 5:42
7. The message moved among the people by networking the community.
8. The lecture method demands the person-to-person method which results in the house-to-house method, and this goes back and supports the first.
9. We need a more comprehensive plan that does more than offer lectures here at the church building.

Conclusions:

1. Christians are called upon to demonstrate compassion; by design we may initiate ways of helping those who are less fortunate.
2. This is a unique calling: God provided the motivation for love by loving us first.
3. At the same time teaching is also an act of love because it provides the necessary tools to be responsible.
4. Sin is at the root of all this suffering, and the Gospel addresses this like no other program.
5. Yet we must by design move from the monastery to Main Street. We must get out of the saltshaker.
6. If we are to have an impact we must find a way to exercise our ministries by getting ourselves out of our enclave of the church building.
7. Like Jesus we must go to where the people are: in their neighborhoods, their homes, and their associations.
8. Let us find ways of doing that.