Outreach Center Network News Letter

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### more Than A Dinner

In Luke14:1-14 we read about a dinner unlike any gathering we may attend. It was a Sabbath and Jesus and His friends were invited over after services to the home of a prominent Pharisee. This was a social gathering of the most important people. They wanted to see what this new, upstart teacher would say or do. Immediately, Jesus was confronted by a man suffering from dropsy. It doesn’t take a rocket scientist to see that this was a trap to get Jesus to do something wrong, like heal a person, on the Sabbath. It was also a major social no no, for Him to do the healing at this type of dinner.

Jesus was not there to make a social splash. He was there to help, to heal, to point people to God. Therefore Jesus restored the man to health and sent him on his way.

Jesus then continued by explaining why he healed on the Sabbath. "If one of you has a son or an ox that falls into a well on the Sabbath day, will you not immediately pull him out?" In short, it's the right thing to do.

Jesus then told a parable. The setting of this parable was a banquet, just like the one Jesus was at. "When you are invited by someone to a wedding feast, do not sit down in a place of honor, lest someone more distinguished than you be invited by him, and he who invited you both will come and say to you, 'Give your place to this person,' and then you will begin with shame to take the lowest place. But when you are invited, go and sit in the lowest place, so that when your host comes he may say to you, 'Friend, move up higher.' Then you will be honored in the presence of all who sit at table with you. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

At first listening, the parable sounds like good social wisdom, a simple way of sparing oneself the embarrassment of being asked by the host to "move down. But Jesus teaches something more. He went on to say that the poor, crippled, lame and blind are the people that should be invited to this banquet feast.

In Jesus’ day, the poor, crippled, lame and blind were at the bottom of the social strata. To invite such people ... well it simply wasn’t heard of in Jesus day.

This is the point Jesus was making. To be invited to the heavenly banquet we call eternal life, we better see ourselves as spiritually poor, crippled and lame. When we place ourselves spiritually at the bottom, Jesus will lift us up. When we admit who and what we are spiritually, then healing can come.

If you look at the life of Jesus you can see he lived this himself. Jesus came down from heaven, born as a human. Jesus chose the lowest spot, even death on a cross, to be with us, sinners, to forgive, and lift us up to heaven

Pastor Dave

### This Month’s Focus

here are some general characteristics of people who are blind. Remember, these are general characteristics and therefore are not necessarily true of every person who is blind. Knowing these may help develop an understanding and sensitivity.

* 2% of any population is totally or functionally blind.
* 2% more of any population are visually impaired. (The majority of these people are not seen by the general population because they are isolated. Surprisingly, they do know of each other and communicate with each other.)
* 18% of blind people read Braille. (This low number is partly due to them not being given the chance or encouragement to do so.)
* 60% approximately, are single.
* 75%+ are unemployed.
* Many if not most are capable of working but are just not given the opportunity.
* 95%+ are unchurched.

Many people who are blind have had bad experiences with Christianity and churches:

1 "if you had enough faith God would heal you." This is untrue because it implies they have no faith and that sight is a necessary item for life. Admittedly it is helpful but just like other physical gifts it is not essential. To play the piano or be more than 5 foot tall, or to have brown hair are all characteristics and not essential for life. So is physical sight.

2 "What did you do that God is punishing you?" This is untrue because the punishment of sin went to Jesus on the cross.

Kind hearted Christians try to help but promise too much. When the promise is not kept this only produces bitterness and distrust in the heart of a blind person toward sighted people and often toward God.

People who are blind are very good at picking up nonverbal cues. They know if you are not sincere or honest. They can see through a false front or facade. They can tell very quickly what your motivations are and they usually do not like the motivation of pity. Blind people want acceptance and simple help.

People who are blind and visually impaired are at different stages of acceptance concerning their loss of sight. This moves from anger, to denial to acceptance.

Because each person's skills and abilities vary, do not assume what a person who is blind might need. Rather, ask what if any help they might want.

### Notes from Centers

**The outreach center in Philadelphia open August 2003. It opened in an Assemblies of God congregation because Martha, the blind leader, was a member there. After several years the pastor moved on to another congregation and very soon the center found herself not as welcomed as before. The center moved several more times until it finally found a home at St. Phillips Lutheran.**

**Martha remains the leader, even after all these moves. Each move took the center to a different part of Philadelphia. Each move picked up new people who were blind, living in that area. God does work good out of everything.**

**One exciting thing took place this past year when Markus and Yvonne, two members of the center, were married. .**

**The outreach center in Jefferson City Missouri opened April 2010. Being the capitol city of the state there are many people who are blind. Pastor Dave traveled there in August and visited the center. 12 people who are blind or low vision were present along with 6 sighted volunteers. He also met with the leaders to plan new ways they may reach more people.**

### The English Language

In that we shared in “This Month’s Focus” some characteristics of people who are blind, this article provide a light-hearted view of the characteristics of blindness. I hope people at your center will get a good laugh.

The English language with its wealth of idiomatic expressions makes the following deductions concerning the characteristics of the blind and their daily activities possible

They may be excused for being forgetful because out of sight is out of mind.

They are very happy; what the eye does not see the heart does not grieve.

They are also very affectionate because love is blind.

They often ignore things by turning a blind eye to them.

They may be ignorant because they are in the dark about things, but do not underestimate them; they've got it all recorded.

They are very friendly people and like to keep in touch.

They also tend to have a real feeling for the world round about them.

They may not be able always to see eye to eye with certain situations.

They may also sometimes lose sight of certain facts but do not underestimate their vision.

Despite being blind they can still look forward to something and see you next week.

You may not always be able to make them see what you mean, but they still are able to have their own view.

They are not blind to their own faults, or to the faults of others.

You can try pulling the wool over their eyes, but you may find that very difficult.

They are so good at what they do that they can do it with their eyes closed but if they try to burn the candle at both ends, they may burn their fingers.

Their medium of writing is easily spotted, is not pointless, in fact there is very much point in using Braille and it is outstanding.

Blind people enjoy a social life. However, one must bear in mind that if you take someone on a date, it will always be a blind date. If they have too much alcohol they may get blind drunk.

Be warned: their rage and fear will always be blind rage and blind fear.

An uneven pavement can be a real stumbling block.

Blind alleys will not be too much of a problem.

They never walk with blinders on but they walk by faith and not by sight.

If you were to come across people who are blind from Venice they would probably be called Venetian blinds.

They are not allowed to drive, but it might be possible, provided they stick to blind rises and go round blind corners. Blind spots would not present a problem for them and at night they will not be blinded by the lights of other vehicles.

These are blind facts but I hope that no-one finds the subject too touching and do not be as blind as those who will not see. Perhaps all this has been an eye opener to someone. May we all not lose sight of the fact that we are living in the age of so-called enlightenment where visionary leadership is very important and where care must be taken not to be blinded by things that are unimportant. Hopefully all this has provided some light relief.

### Final Thoughts

In upcoming issues we can and will look at many of the same topics as well as others. If you have questions, thoughts or suggestions, please post them on the blind ministry email list.

Pastor Dave

Rev. Dave Andrus

Not Alone Internet Ministry (NAIM)

http://www.not-alone.net